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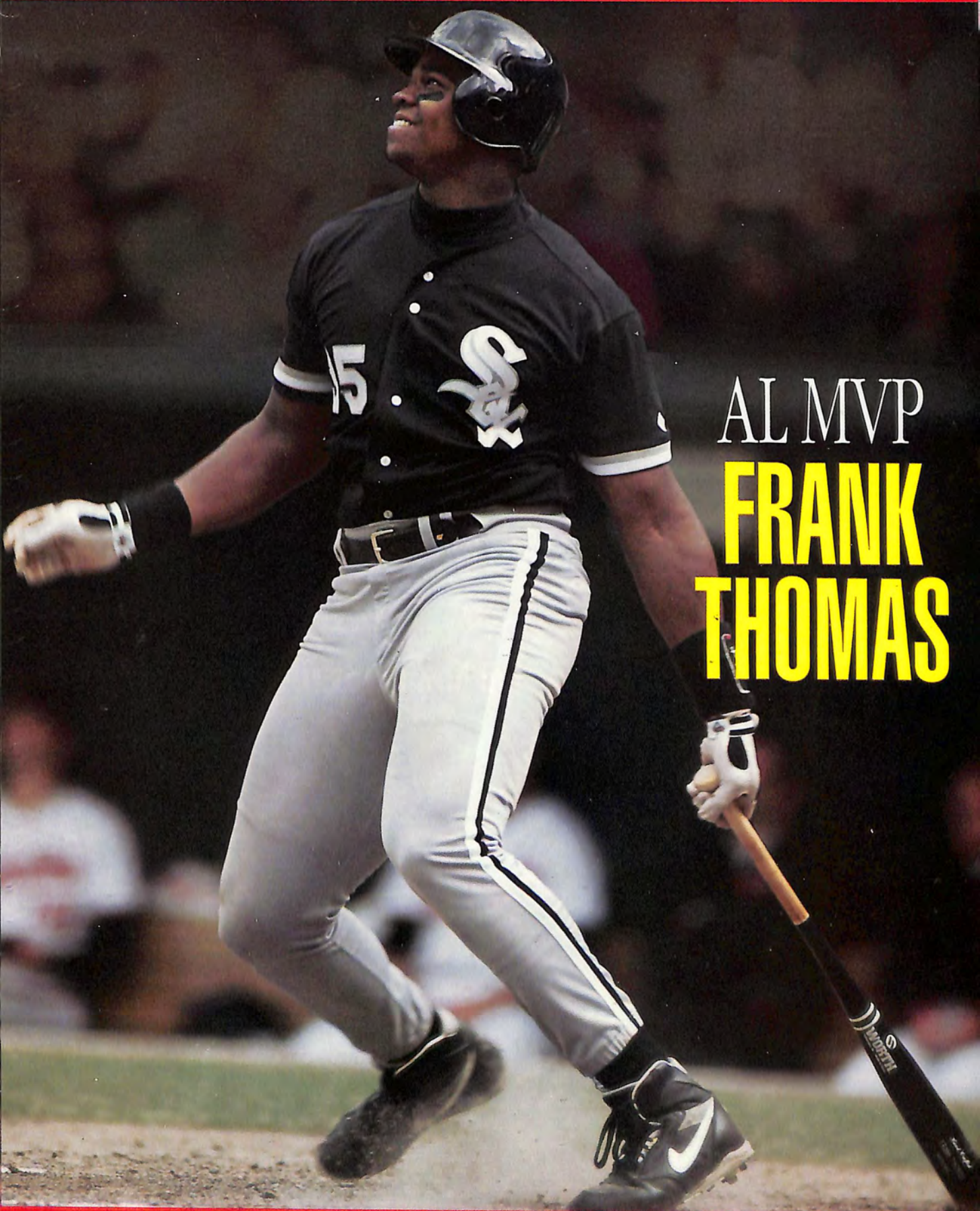
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A photograph of three men in cowboy hats standing in a field at sunset, with a horse in the foreground. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun, creating a silhouette effect on the horse and a soft glow on the men. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

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Marshall Flemion

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Jacqueline Manfredi

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RESEARCH EDITOR **Darryl Howerton**

RESEARCH EDITOR **Brett Norton**

RESEARCH EDITOR **Connie Loizos**

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Russell R. Holster Jr. (GENERAL), **Rick Weinberg** (SENIOR WRITER), **Terry Mulgannon** (GENERAL), **Steve Rosenbloom** (HOCKEY), **Craig Ellenport** (FOOTBALL), **Steve Buckley** (GENERAL), **Danny Sheridan** (ANALYST), **Tom Singer** (BASEBALL), **Stig Jantz** (HISTORIAN), **Tom Friend** (GENERAL), **Jeff Weinstock** (GENERAL), **Richard L. Watt** (MEMORABILIA), **Davis Miller** (GENERAL), **Michael Bradley** (BASKETBALL), **John Czarnecki** (PRO FOOTBALL), **Barry Meisel** (PRO FOOTBALL)

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Tom DiPace, **Ron Vesely**, **Bruce Schwartzman**, **Bob Rosato**, **Jon Soohoo/Bernstein & Assoc.**, **David Mezey**

ADVERTISING SALES

New York: **Bill Croarkin**, **Pete Haefner**, **Marc Rebucci**
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New York: 437 Madison Ave., 28th Floor, New York, NY 10022, 212/835-9150
Detroit: 333 West Fort Street, Suite 1800, Detroit, MI 48226, 313/964-6690
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MITCHELL LAYTON



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SPORT

M A G A Z I N E

TO: The Readers of SPORT Magazine

FROM: Steve Garvey

RE: The Future of SPORT!

It is with great pleasure that I announce my association with Petersen Publishing Company as executive publisher of SPORT Magazine. As a fan of SPORT for more than 35 years, I have always admired the quality and dedication of SPORT to its readers. And with my experience as a professional athlete, sports marketer and writer, you can be assured this magazine will continue to focus on the athletes, teams and issues that are important to the world of SPORT today.

With that goal in mind, I offer SPORT readers the opportunity to write us with your thoughts and suggestions on how we might make this great magazine even better.

Our package this month, sure to entice and entertain the sports enthusiast, includes intimate interviews with the top talent in baseball: AL MVP Frank Thomas; the newest Ranger in Texas, Will Clark; and NL Rookie of the Year Mike Piazza.

Patrick Ewing and Hakeem Olajuwon have yet to win an NBA championship. You'll read about their thoughts and feelings on their chances this season as we sprint toward the playoffs. The NFL season's over, but SPORT offers die-hard fans our Draft Day forecast of where the top collegiate players will land. Who will win the Stanley Cup? Our NHL playoff preview reveals whom we like.

The world of SPORT has never been more exciting. Each month, I'll look to share my thoughts about the games people play and the people who influence those games in the pages of SPORT.

Sincerely,

Steve Garvey



Please send your suggestions to:

SPORT Magazine

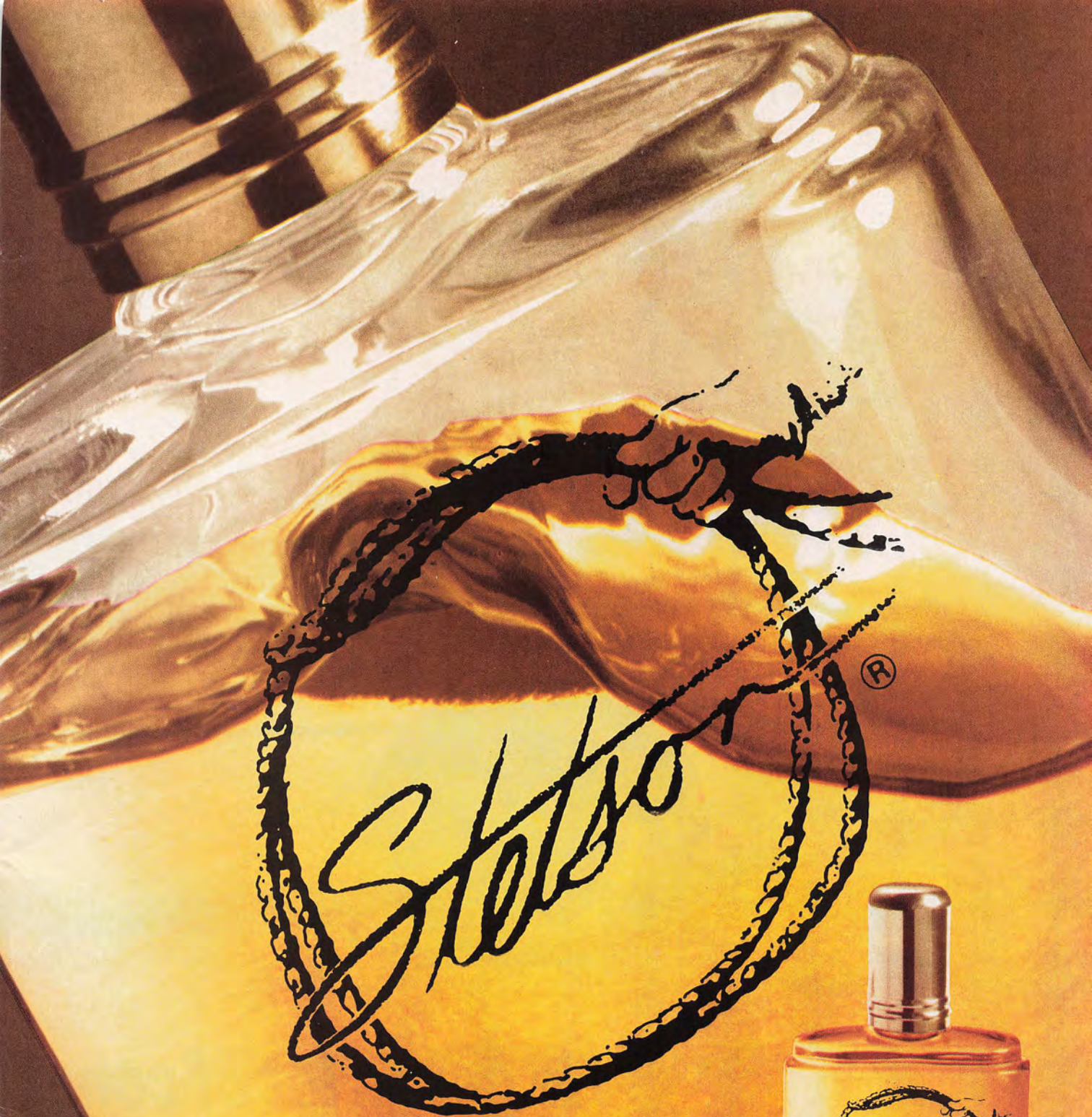
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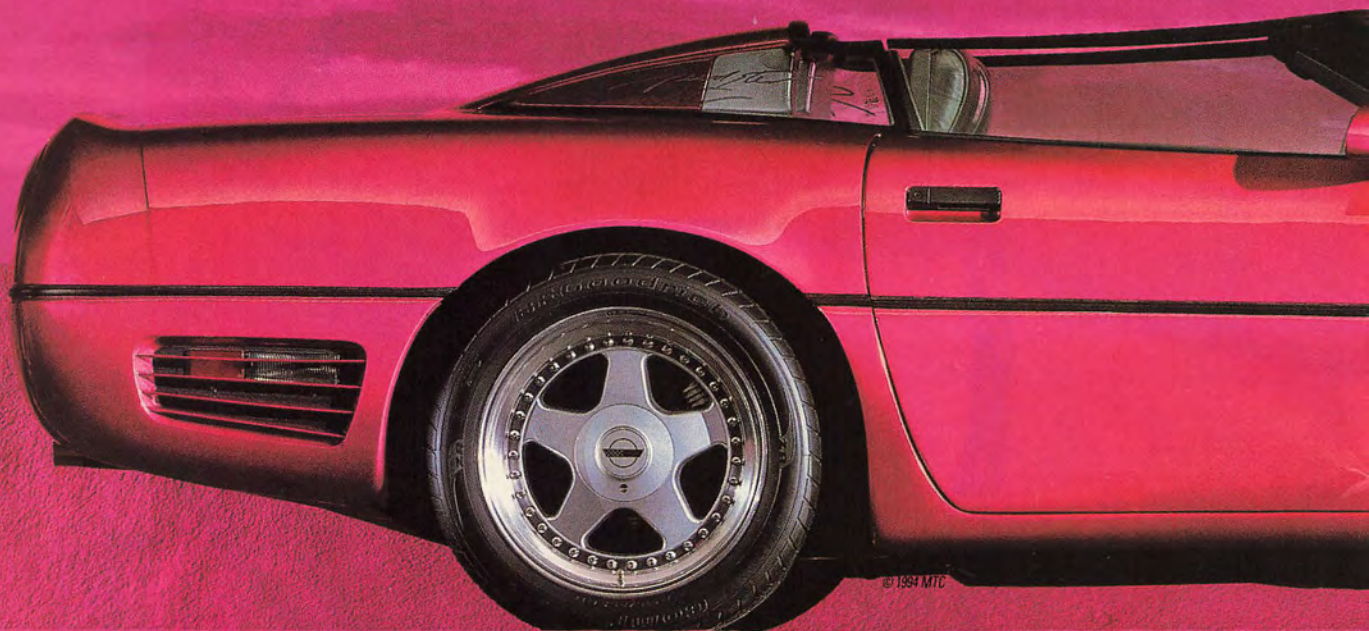


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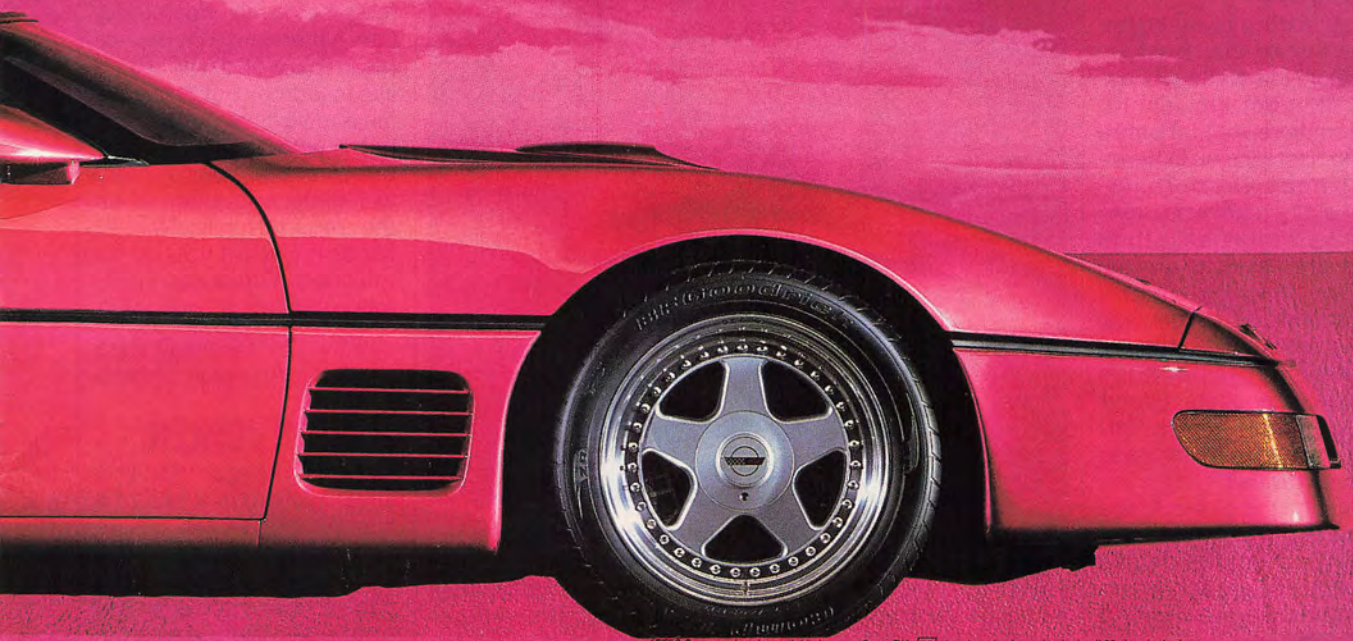


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SWIMSUIT H.E.A.T.

As a subscriber for two years now, I know that I can always rely on SPORT for the best coverage on sports and the very best swimsuit gals. Thanks again! Let's see one more photo of that sexy Cat from "Acapulco H.E.A.T." She's fantastic!

Dennis Comstock
Muskegon, Michigan

At your command!—Editor

NEW NATIONAL PASTIME

I'm writing to disagree with your article "Basketball: Our New National Pastime" (March). I'm only 13, but I believe we just came off the best season in baseball since I was born. Almost every team was competitive while basketball seems to have the annual Dallas, Minnesota and Sacramento performances. Basketball players get more endorsements because they wear sneakers. Everyone wears sneakers, but how many people wear baseball cleats?

But one thing I would like to see is the World Series played during the day so that kids my age can watch the World Series winning moments.

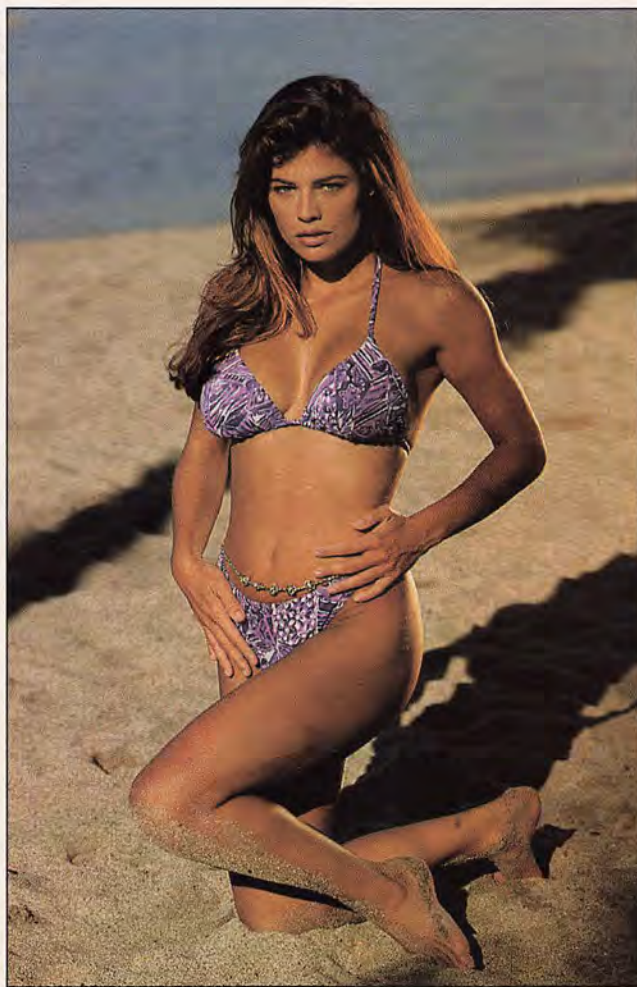
Brian Buturla
North Brunswick, New Jersey

I have one more theory for your article on our new national pastime. Basketball does well with its Hall of Fame selections, baseball does not. The Halls of Fame should honor their heroes. Baseball finds it hard to honor more than one person per year, spending more effort blocking selections than making them.

Phil Hirl
Tigard, Oregon

TRASH THE TALK

After reading "Talkin' Trash" (February), I would



like to thank Ed Kiersh for his insight on NBA trash-talking. As a small high school JV basketball coach, I desperately try to teach the fundamentals of the game. Each day at practice and at every game, I watch players dream of dunking (slapping the glass) and talking trash. Now your magazine supports what our program has been trying to stop.

True, it may be "a part of today's NBA game," but using Michael Jordan, Larry Bird and the other NBA stars to support it was a poor decision. These athletes became the best in the game from hard work, not from intimidation. Between the NBA highlight films and the shallow press, it is easy to see why young

players focus on useless parts of the game—dunking, trash-talking, behind-the-back passes—rather than learning the fundamentals.

Tim Vacchiano
Hiram, Maine

PAYTON SNUB

I have a beef regarding the Sport Talk article, "Kevin Johnson rates the point guards" (March). Johnson mentions two to three young point guards with potential, when the talent *minus* the potential are exemplified in Gary Payton. Payton has raised his scoring average in each of his four seasons and last year found the jump shot that most NBA scouts considered his lone missing element. Payton is also the

best on-the-ball defender in the Western Conference. He's one of the top five point guards in the NBA.

Ben Zickes
Seattle, Washington

RALLYING BEHIND RODMAN

Thank you for finally clearing the air on Dennis Rodman ("On the Rebound," March). I have to admit that I have not always been a fan of his, but there's something about me that feels for the misunderstood. I think there are a lot of people in this world who would like to journey out of the circle and visit the edge of the paper with Dennis, but they are afraid of what society will think about them when they return. Thanks, Dennis, for doing what you do on the court. You are an inspiration to all of us "weirdos."

Tyrone Q. Byrd
Arlington, Virginia

JUNIOR JEERER

Ken Griffey Jr. (One on One, March) is a hell of a baseball player, but he sure is an ass. Your article states: "...father and son hit back-to-back home runs at Anaheim Stadium against the Angels. After Senior hit his shot to straightaway center field, he crossed the plate, high-fived his teammate and said, 'That's the way you do it, son.'

'We could've lost all our games the rest of the season and I wouldn't have cared...' Junior was quoted as saying.

What kind of a jerk would make a statement like that?

Kenneth A. Dys
Lakeville, New York

Argue with us, applaud us, advise us. Address your letters to SPORT Mail, 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90048.

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BASEBALL REVENUE-SHARING BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

The prevailing wisdom in the Western world long has been that free enterprise and unfettered competition are the lifeblood of economic prosperity. A free market, as the theory goes, leads to the greatest productivity and the best product. It stimulates inventiveness, provides the most satisfaction to consumers and the general public. Moreover, it is said that free competition weeds out the inferior producer, which is replaced by a more efficient one, all benefiting the general welfare.

That is the theory, but practice is different. Government subsidies, tax breaks, regulations to reward favored lobbyists, and political contributors are only a few of the anti-competitive measures that are commonplace.

In professional sports, the situation is quite different—at least, on the field, where it is recognized that unless athletes are permitted to, and, in fact, do compete to the best of their abilities, there can be no meaning to either individual or team sports. Take the Black Sox scandal of 1919, for example, in which gamblers' attempts to bribe eight baseball players into throwing the 1919 World Series shook Major League Baseball to its very roots.

Widespread awareness of the inseparable connection between athletes performing at their best competitive level and the integrity of the activities in which they are engaged always has existed. Sports followers—fans, the media, congressmen—have no trouble recalling the 75-year-old Black Sox events or understanding their significance. But try their memories or understanding of the 1985-88 baseball collusion scandal and you are far more likely to receive a blank stare. Failure of owners and management to give their best efforts toward winning is simply not seen as delivering a damaging blow to the integrity of the game.

The perpetrators of the collusion conspiracy (in which no free agents, regardless of their acknowledged ability, received any bona fide offers)



BY MARVIN MILLER

were the owners, commissioners, league presidents and general managers—and *all* such officials were involved. Their secret agreement in violation of their contract with the Players Association and of their commitment to the fans meant they moved purposefully *not* to field the best possible teams, which altered the outcome of entire pennant races and postseason series for three years!

The anticompetitive nature of the collusion conspiracy represented the most serious scandal in baseball history. To state that it was dealt with inadequately during and after the fact by the perpetrators themselves and by observers and commentators is clearly an understatement. Purposeful underperformance by an athlete is shocking behavior. And that is universally acknowledged. Such conduct by baseball club owners and officials seemingly is neither perceived nor understood, and, by implication, is condoned. As a result, public awareness of the anticompetitive mode toward which professional team sports are increasingly moving is close to zero. There have been almost no meaningful discussions or analyses of revenue-sharing (now the vogue in basketball and football and on the

crisp in baseball) or of the imposition of below-market-value limits on players' compensation—euphemistically known as “salary caps.”

The baseball club owners have announced a plan to “share their revenue” (with each other). The plan apparently provides that the 28 major-league clubs will be divided into three approximately equal groups: One-third will be treated as “have nots”—clubs theoretically burdened by the relatively small size of their geographical market; this group will receive a bounty or a subsidy of millions of dollars each year. The handouts nominally will come from the roughly one-third of the clubs deemed to be “the haves.” The remaining third of the clubs will neither pay nor receive a dole.

The eight clubs in the “have” category (big-city clubs such as the Yankees, Mets, White Sox, Cubs, Red Sox and Dodgers who can't win a pennant despite their supposed advantages) are presumably the benefactors, or payers, in the scheme, but there is a kicker. The plan will not go into effect, say the owners, unless the players union can be pressured to conspire against the players by placing a maximum limit on players' salaries (which are not negotiated by the union and never have been!). The purpose of a salary cap is clear: to get and keep salaries down below the fair market value of the players' services. The savings generated by the salary cap will go where? To the fans? To good causes in the baseball communities? Hardly. They will go solely to the owners of the “haves,” “have nots” and intermediate clubs alike. So the three groups of clubs that would participate in revenue-sharing require a fourth party to make it work: the players who would supply the financing. All clubs would share the revenue supplied by the players' reduced salaries, a neat idea of the club owners. All that is required is to sell it to the players. What are the odds?

(Continued on page 94)



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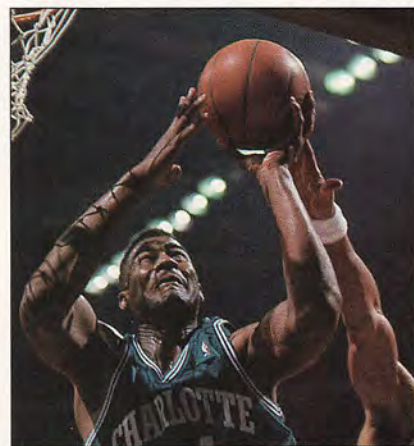
When it comes to job security in professional sports, it's always nice to have someone on your side who recognizes your skills. It also helps if the supporter happens to be one of the best in his sport.

Last season, Charlotte Hornets forward Kenny Gattison (pictured below) appeared on his way to a new job location as trade winds began to blow. But teammate Larry Johnson heard about the possible deal involving Gattison and stepped in. "You trade Gat, you trade me," LJ warned. Gattison is still a Hornet.

"I really appreciate what Larry Johnson did for me," Gattison says. "At the time, Charlotte was trying to sign Alonzo [Mourning]. They needed as much money as they could get under the salary cap...so quite naturally my job wasn't too secure. But that's when Larry spoke up....Obviously, he knows what I can do."

Basically, what Gattison does is the dirty work. He pounds the boards, plays defense and scores a few buckets.

—Donald Hunt



DAVID LAMKYLE

A gambling scandal has prevented Pete Rose, the all-time hit king, from admission into the Hall of Fame. But it didn't stop SPORT from going down to Boca Raton, Fla., to ask Rose, still a student of the game, to predict baseball's division winners. Here's what he had to say.

AMERICAN LEAGUE EAST

Toronto Blue Jays: "You gotta go with Toronto, a team that's won back-to-back world championships. Why? Their infield is great....[Paul] Molitor is a proven star, and what a pitching staff—[Juan] Guzman, [Pat] Hentgen, [Todd] Stottlemyre and Duane Ward. The best."

AMERICAN LEAGUE CENTRAL

Chicago White Sox: "No one will beat

Chicago, not with Frank Thomas at first....Julio Franco is a great replacement for Bo [Jackson in the DH spot]. Their pitching, with Wilson Alvarez, Roberto Hernandez, Jack McDowell, is tops. There are just no weaknesses. But perhaps the most important factor is that this is a team that's hungry. They're coming off a [disappointing playoff series]. They felt they should've gone to the World Series last year."

AMERICAN LEAGUE WEST

Texas Rangers: "Texas runs away with it. They have a lot of leadership in Will Clark, who can hit; a lot of Texas hitters can. Juan Gonzalez is capable of 500

(Continued on page 16)

EDITED BY WILLIAM LADSON & RAYMOND HARPER

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SPORT TALK

(Continued from page 15)

home runs....Texas' pitching isn't too bad either."

NATIONAL LEAGUE WEST

San Francisco Giants: "They'll win the division, but a lot of strange things can happen. Just look at the way Colorado finished last year and all the acquisitions they've made [Howard Johnson, Ellis Burks, Walt Weiss]. They are committed to winning. The Giants do have to replace Will Clark, but Mark Portugal was a strong [acquisition]. They'll win their division, but no way are they going to knock off the Atlanta Braves."

NATIONAL LEAGUE CENTRAL

Houston Astros: "They'll be revitalized. Expect [Doug] Drabek and [Greg] Swindell to bounce back. The loss of Portugal really hurts. He was great last year. The biggest pickup, though, is Mitch Williams. He just had to get out of Philly. I like Mitch. Streaky, but also a winner."

NATIONAL LEAGUE EAST

Atlanta Braves: "Atlanta has no weakness. They have a lot of young talent to replace Otis Nixon. [Fred] McGriff is one of the best RBI men in the league, the infield is superb, and I still like [Terry] Pendleton. The pitching is unrivaled."

WORLD SERIES WINNER:

"Atlanta will go to the World Series [against the White Sox] and win it all. This is their year."
—Ed Kiersh

SCOTT CUNNINGHAM

TELEVISION

DIRECTLY TO PARADISE

GM Hughes Electronics is joining the telecommunications war with the development of a new satellite that will allow the transmission of a choice of sporting events never before possible with regular cable or pay-per-view.

The unit, called DirecTv, requires an initial investment of \$700 for the RCA-brand DSS equipment, which includes an 18-inch satellite dish and decoder box that will enable viewers from the U.S. and Canada to watch any professional game played in North America at \$2 to \$6 per game, or about \$85 to \$125 for season tickets.

"DirecTv is going to give sports fans more of what they want," says Hughes spokesman Tom Bracken, "which is more games, more choices, more selections."

A Pittsburgh fan living in Los Angeles, for instance, will be able to view every Pirates game from his or her living room.

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SPORT TALK

B A S E B A L L

SHERIDAN'S FANTASY SLEEPERS

Don't fret if you miss out on Barry Bonds and other big-name stars in your fantasy draft. Here's a list of major-leaguers who will exceed expectations.

AMERICAN LEAGUE EAST

Baltimore: Before he got hurt last year, Jeffrey Hammonds proved he was a bona fide big-leaguer, hitting .305 in 33 games.

Boston: Catcher Dave Valle hit a career-high 13 homers for the Mariners. Playing in Fenway, that number could double.

Detroit: Look for catcher Chad Kreuter to play 140 games and hit close to .300.

N.Y. Yankees: Disregard Jim Abbott's poor '93 season. He'll adjust to the Big Apple and win 15.

Toronto: If Carlos Delgado's minor-league numbers are any indication, we'll be comparing him to Johnny Bench.

AMERICAN LEAGUE CENTRAL

Chicago White Sox: Scott Ruffcorn's impressive minor-league record shows that he can replace Tim Lincecum in the starting rotation.

Cleveland: Look for Jim Thome to be one of the team leaders in home runs and RBI.

Kansas City: Vince Coleman is back in Missouri where he had his best years.

Milwaukee: Look for shortstop Pat Listach to return to rookie form.

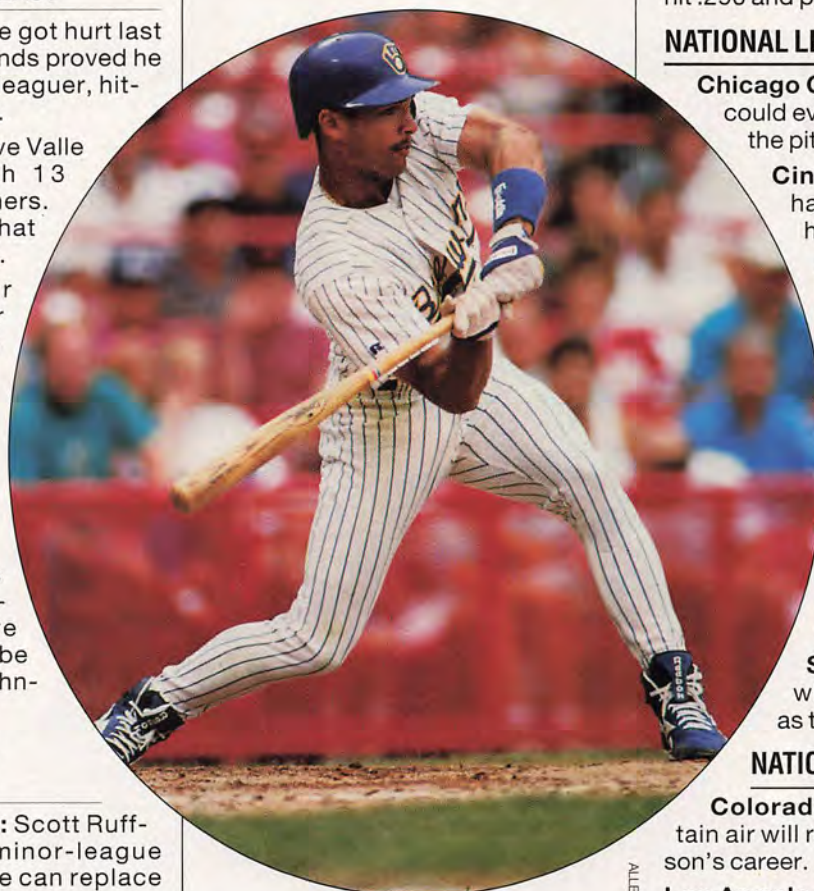
Minnesota: Don't be surprised if catcher Matt Walbeck puts up nice numbers.

AMERICAN LEAGUE WEST

California: The Angels may have

found a closer in Mike Butcher, who saved eight games last September.

Oakland: Don't be surprised if second baseman Brent Gates makes his first All-Star appearance.



Montreal: The Expos compare Cliff Floyd to MVP Frank Thomas.

N.Y. Mets: A good work ethic gives outfielder Jeromy Burnitz a shot at 20 homers.

Philadelphia: Kevin Stocker will hit .290 and play a solid shortstop.

NATIONAL LEAGUE CENTRAL

Chicago Cubs: Steve Trachsel could eventually be the ace of the pitching staff.

Cincinnati: Bret Boone has the power to hit 20 home runs.

Houston: Count on Doug Drabek to bounce back after leading the NL in losses last year.

Pittsburgh: Despite his 5.61 ERA, Tim Lincecum showed in the last two months of last season that he could still pitch in the big leagues.

St. Louis: Mike Perez will replace Lee Smith as the closer.

NATIONAL LEAGUE WEST

Colorado: The Rocky Mountain air will revive Howard Johnson's career.

Los Angeles: Delino DeShields will battle Roberto Alomar and Carlos Baerga for the label of baseball's best second baseman.

San Diego: Bip Roberts has returned to the Padres and will be the team's MVP.

San Francisco: Royce Clayton's bat will start reminding people of Barry Larkin.

—Danny Sheridan

Seattle: The Mariners craved a left-handed power hitter and found one in former Astro Eric Anthony, who hit 25 homers the last two years.

Texas: Expect 10 wins from Jack Armstrong for the power-hitting Rangers.

NATIONAL LEAGUE EAST


Atlanta: The Braves expect big things from Javier Lopez behind the plate.

Florida: Bret Barberie has the potential to hit .300.

ALLEN KEES/BOB ROSATO SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Look for Danny Sheridan's 1994 Guide to Winning Rotisserie Baseball at your local bookstore.





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HAVE YOU DRIVEN A FORD LATELY?

NICKNAME-ORDAINED FATE: THE EASY WAY TO SPORTS STARDOM/BY SCOTT OSTLER

My parents didn't name me Crime Dog, and while I have found it in my heart to forgive them, I can't help but agonize over how much better my life could have been.

Yes, I am among the ranks of the nickname-challenged. I ain't got one.

I am not a Pogo Joe or a Jaguar, a Wild Horse of the Osage or Wild Bull of the Pampas. I am not a Duke, a Doc, a Duck, a Buck or a Truck.

So many people let me down. My friends had years to come up with a cool nickname for me and failed.

Sure, if you want to get technical and analytical about it, I guess I share some of the blame for being condemned to a nicknameless life. I have to ask myself, "Have you done anything to merit being called Dizzy or Daffy or Pork Chop or Vinegar Bend or even Lefty?"

The answer is no, although I maintain it is a cause-and-effect thing. If you find yourself with a great name or nickname, destiny pushes you above the rabble.

Who are the three greatest center fielders ever? Willie, Mickey and the Duke, right? Notice there are no Bernards or Phils or Scotts in that group? Somebody names you Mickey Mantle, you have a serious advantage over the Ed Finsterbergs of the world.

If a kid named Duke Snider puts a bat on a ball, the Dodgers are going to start scouting him at age 8.

Barry Bonds...how could he miss? And Joe Montana? What else could he have become? A bus driver? An orthodontist? He had to become either a great NFL quarterback or an old-West gunslinger. It's name-ordained fate. Tyrone Power was never going to sell vacuum cleaners door-to-door.

I played high school basketball against a kid named Fair Hooker, who went on to become a great wide receiver for the Cleveland Browns. I'm sure he worked hard, and I know he had skills, but how could he fail with a name like Fair Hooker?

Admittedly, the fate-in-the-name theory has holes. I also went to high school with a Charlie Super and a Howard Howard, both of whom managed to escape athletic stardom beyond the prep level.

They had great names and they blew it, and that's their problem. The people I feel sorry for are the ones who never had a chance in the first place to be a Choo Choo



Charlie Justice or a Night Train Lane.

The people I feel sorry for are the people like me, who, unless they forget their wife's birthday or skull someone in the next four-some with a two-iron approach shot, are destined to plod through life nicknameless.

Or are we? Why can't we take our fate in our own hands? If you're like me, here's what you can do:

Change your name legally. Joe Montana is taken, but how about Bill Wyoming, or Ed New Hampshire? Try to be original. Mickey Mays and Duke Mantle? Too derivative.

If friends and coworkers laugh at you for trying to invent a new identity, explain to them that there was a clerical error on your birth certificate and your true given name only recently came to light.

Buy a name. Ballplayers today sell their uniform numbers. Rickey Henderson supposedly bought the use of his number 24 from a fellow Blue Jay when Rickey was traded to Toronto last season. So maybe players will sell their nicknames. Have your agent phone their agent and make an offer.

Another tactic is to invent your own nickname. Technically, this is not allowed. You're supposed to earn your nickname. Here again, ingenuity is required.

If your name is Joe Smith, send yourself a letter at work addressed to Helicopter Smith, then sheepishly beg your secretary

not to let anyone else in the office know about your crazy old college nickname. Within three days, "Joe Smith" will be history and "Copter Smith" will be holding court at the water cooler, spinning tales of old hoop glory.

Choosing a nickname is not easy, but here are some handy tips.

Phone L.A. Clippers general manager Elgin Baylor, one of the great nickname inventors of all time, and ask for help. Be prepared to humble yourself. Baylor nicknamed Gail Goodrich "Stumpy," and on Jerry West he hung "Tweety Bird" and "Zeke From Cabin Creek."

Think astronomy. Lloyd B. Free felt he was an all-world player, so he legally changed his name to World B. Free. Wilt Chamberlain still considers himself "The Big Dipper." Jay Johnstone was "Moonman" and Bill Lee was "Spaceman." And who can forget Marris Blackman?

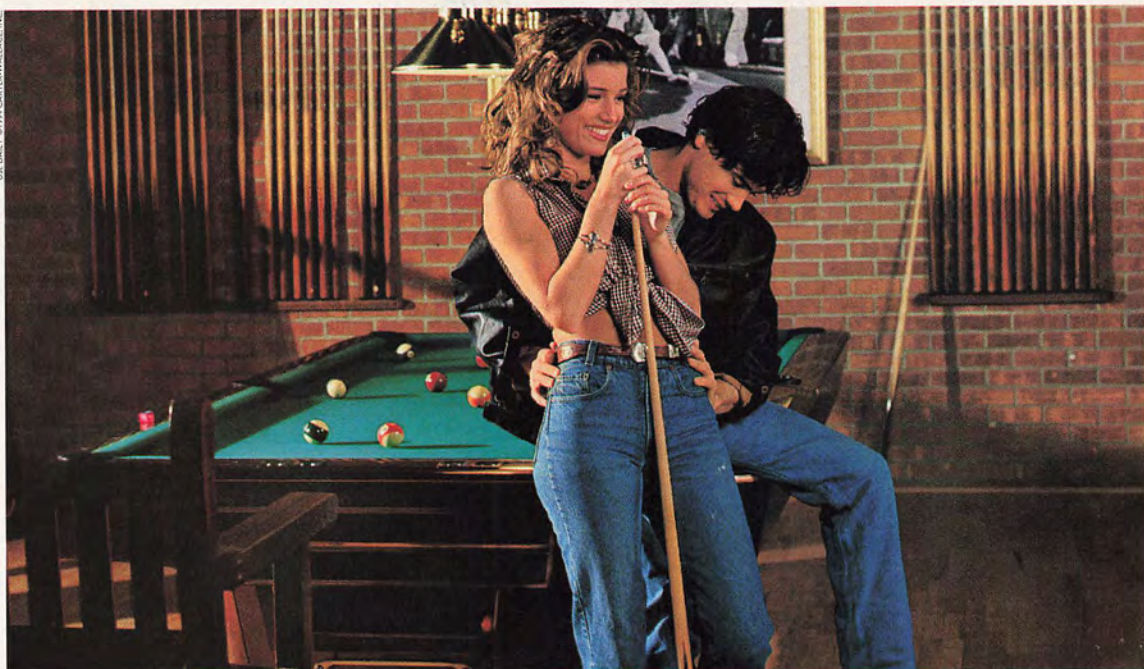
Check your profile. Maybe you can follow in the deep footsteps of Billy "The Whopper" Paultz, Fat Lever, Refrigerator Perry, Two Ton Tony Galento, Charles "Round Mound of Rebound" Barkley or Dinner Bell Mel Turpin.

Try the Chris Berman route, a play on words. Les (Big Game) Hunter, Lynbert (Cheese) Johnson, Charles (Razor) Edge, Bobby (Golden) Rule, and Fred (King) Lear.

What kind of game do you feature? Downtown Freddie Brown hit the long shots, George (Iceman) Gervin was cool, Mitch (Wild Thing) Williams is wild, Air Jordan was high, Slammin' Sammy (Snead) and Slingin' Sammy (Baugh) were both long. Forties NBA hoopster George Glamach shot 25 percent from the field one year and earned the name Blind Bomber. Another guy shot 24 percent and became etched in history as Buckshot O'Brien.

Got a slight defect? Mordecai Three-Finger Brown, Gimp Brown, Jeffrey (Penitentiary Face) Leonard, Ernie (Schnoz) Lombardi, Turkeyfoot Brower, Baldy Sich, Crooked Arm Bob Cremins and Glass Arm Eddie Brown all made it pay off. Dummy Hoy couldn't talk; Earache Meyer couldn't shut up.

The important thing is to act quickly and stop wasting your life in a dead-end name. This spring, I plan to offer Fred McGriff \$100 in cash for exclusive rights to Crime Dog. Then stand aside, pal, and watch my career take off. ★



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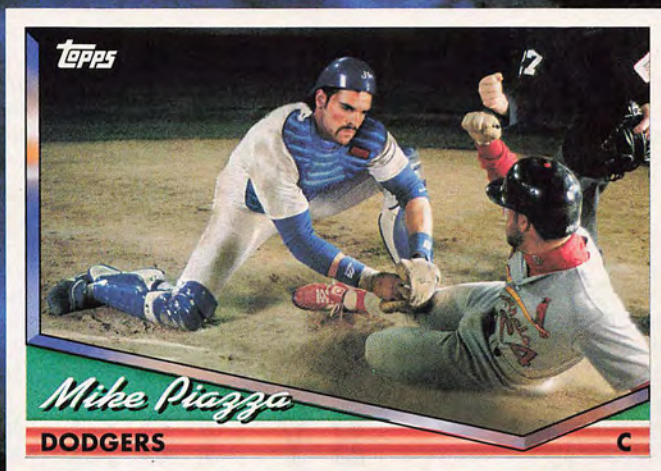
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ONE ON ONE

MIKE PIAZZA

"BEING RECOGNIZED IS SOMETHING I'VE NEVER
HAD TO DEAL WITH BEFORE"

It's the middle of September, and Mike Piazza has a fever. His head pounds and his bones ache, but it's all numbed by the flash-flood of adrenaline.

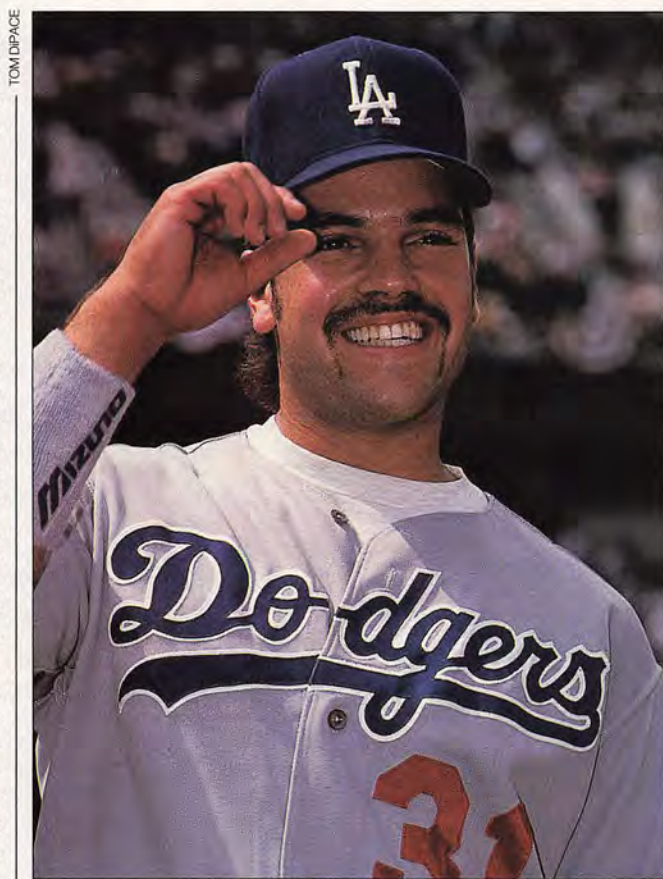
The Los Angeles Dodgers' rookie catcher has an average hovering around .300, already with 30 homers and 95 RBI, and he's shot down runners as if skeet-shooting at the country club.

"I'm tired, cranky, not in a good mood at all," Piazza will later reflect. "I'm thinking, 'Geez, there are two more weeks left and I'm not getting a break.' This is such a mental game. All attitude. But I've already had a good year and anything else is a plus. So I say the heck with it and just go out there to swing the bat and have fun."

Over the final dozen games, despite the cumulative strain of 134 games already behind the plate, Piazza goes 22-for-47 and pads his power numbers with five homers and 17 RBI. "Not a bad way to close out," he says.

And he ends the '93 season by destroying the San Francisco Giants' title hopes, the type of nationally televised master stroke that can blur the line between nice seasons and legendary ones: two homers, five RBI, a pair of curtain calls for sold-out Dodger Stadium; all the elements except the bulb-busting smash off the light tower. But, then, unlike Roy Hobbs, Piazza had played a day game.

The day after, Piazza the



tunnel-visioned, hard-nosed catcher disappears and is replaced by Piazza, New Wave Backstop. He wears Hawaii floral under a leather jacket, and the stubble is already shaped into an emerging goatee. He is talking about "slamming NoCal," washing victory down with "barley pops" and feeling "wired by the energy of those fans."

"I think they were just expressing that they, you know, recognized what I'd done," Piazza says. "I've fed off them all year. I wish I could individually thank each of them."

Actually, what Piazza would rather do is gather all the people who'd doubted him, who'd put him through personal hell for six years, in one room—the L.A. Conven-

tion Center should hold 'em—and individually stick his tongue out at each of them.

He'd had to grovel for this? For the privilege of giving the Dodgers a unanimous Rookie of the Year show, throwing out a franchise-record 58 runners attempting to steal while batting .318 with 35 homers and 112 RBI? There are monster seasons; this was a Godzilla season. The homers set an L.A. record and were the second-most ever by an NL rookie. The RBI have been bettered by only two NL rookies, and hardly recently—Jimmy Williams had 116 in 1899 and Wally Berger 119 in 1930. Not bad for a 62nd-round draft pick.

Now the obvious question: Is Piazza a reincarnation of Johnny Bench, or of other recent unanimous Rookie of the Year catchers who've faded like denim?

Take your pick: Benito Santiago splashed at .300, with 18 homers and 79 RBI in 1987 but hasn't hit over .270 since, while averaging 13 homers and 58 RBI; Sandy Alomar Jr. has been an even bigger disaster in the three years since debuting at .290, 9, 66 in 1990, appearing in a total of 204 games and delivering just eight homers and 65 RBI.

Piazza, who over the off-season signed a second-season-record \$4.2 million, three-year contract, figures to stick around. He gained a reputation as a lethal mistake hitter, and pitchers will

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ONE ON ONE

always make mistakes for an aggressive batter to pounce on. He powers the ball, depending on the pitch's location, to any field—or over any fence—and how do you defend that?

Most importantly, Mike knows how he got here. If he takes his success for granted, it will be the first time. Piazza dragged bottom for six years, from the time his stellar prep career ended in oblivion until 1992, when he lit up the minor leagues to emerge, finally, as a bona fide prospect.

His 1993 season inspired many attempts to place it in historical perspective. Most are debatable, but this one is not: It was the loudest condemnation yet of the science of scouting. Science? A lot of scouts out there need new Ouija boards.

They all looked at Piazza and yet none saw him—even though Mike, despite being set up for a carefree life by family wealth, wasn't a casual ballplayer at Phoenixville (Pa.) Area High, neither in attitude nor actions. Since his early teens, he'd been obsessed with becoming a big-leaguer, and the dedication had spawned an MVP career that ended with him breaking the Phoenixville home run record set by Andre Thornton, who went on to hit 253 dingers in the majors.

"One reason Mike was overlooked," says John (Doc) Kennedy, baseball coach at Phoenixville since 1978, "[was that] he only played first base here and was slow, and a lot of scouts said, 'I can find someone who can match the offensive performance with better speed.'"

Piazza wasted 1987 at the University of Miami—going 1-for-9 as a reserve first baseman before quitting—and returned to Florida in 1988, to Miami-Dade North Community College, where he hit .364. But Piazza went

"This was the first off-season that I could just enjoy laying back. It's good to give a body a break. The season takes a toll."

hitless when Dodgers scout Bill Pleis checked him out on orders from Ben Wade, the scouting director who'd been badgered by Tom Lasorda, Piazza's close friend.

Despite Pleis' "Forget it" report on Wade's desk, Lasorda made his tentative request. "Draft him. Put him on the bottom of the list. Make him the last guy."

Wade complied, and a couple of months later he was introduced to Piazza in a Dodger Stadium tryout. He saw the power, listened to Lasorda's persuasion and called Pleis while making out a \$15,000 check, no doubt a record for a 62nd-round draft choice.

"Listen, Bill, don't get upset, but I'm going to sign this kid."

"But Ben, I've never seen him hit a ball," Pleis said.

"Well, he hit 'em here where I'd never seen 'em hit before...and he says he'll catch."

Piazza was determined to learn under fire a position he had never played before, and, after staggering through the 1989 season in Salem, was eager for an accelerated course. He asked to be sent to Campo Las Palmas, the Dodgers' baseball school in the Dominican Republic, becoming the first American to enroll there.

"But it wasn't like going out there and putting all the

equipment on made me a catcher," Piazza says. "I took pride in doing it right, and I knew I had a tremendous amount of work to do. I knew I swung the bat well enough to get to play if I learned to catch; I recognized it as a premium position."

For three years, he kept working, kept coming, kept putting up with the snide bench-jockeying: "Hey, it's Lasorda's little godson!" (Never mind that 11-year-old Tommy, the youngest of five Piazza boys, is the actual godson of the manager.) This inadvertent hurdle resulting from his friendship with Lasorda was the only impediment Vincent Piazza a life otherwise invested in turning his son into a big-leaguer.

In September 1992, catapulted by an irrefutable minor-league display (.354, 23, 89), Mike Piazza joined the

Dodgers on the first of the month and made his debut that day by going 3-for-3 in Wrigley Field.

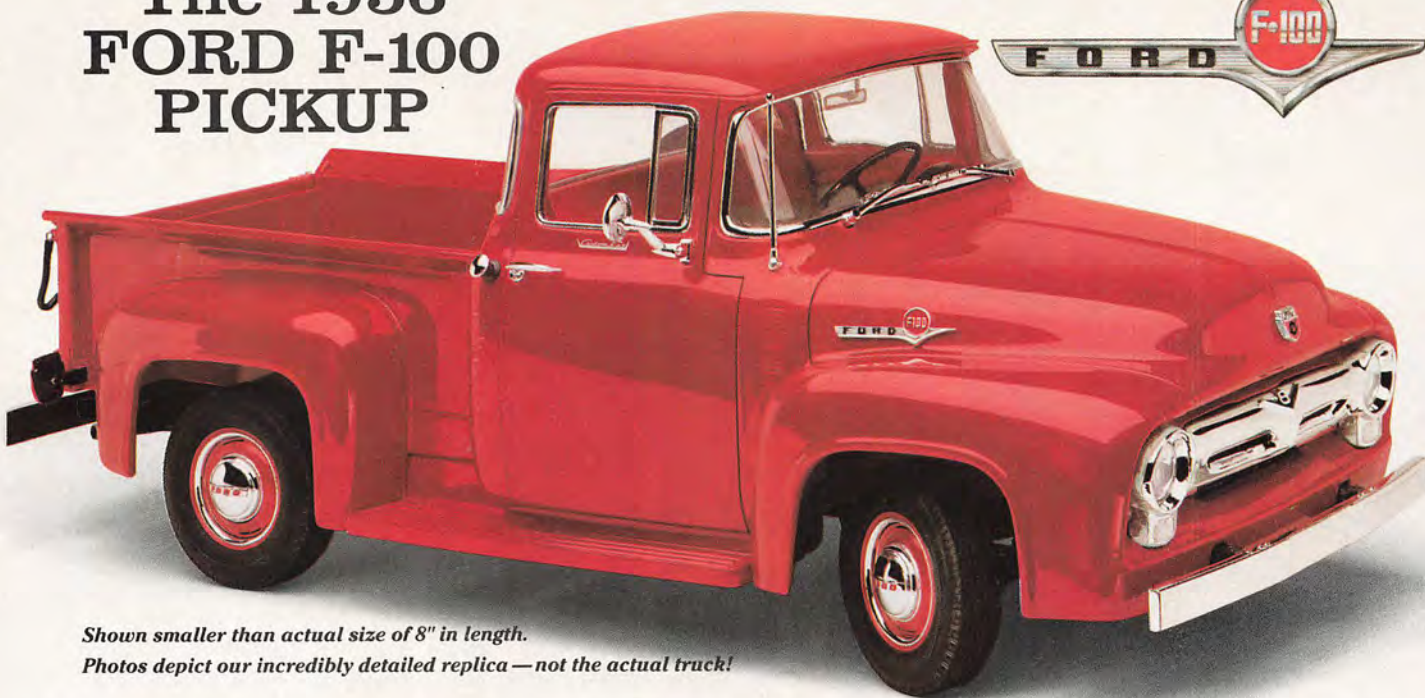
His high school-dropout father had clobbered odds on the way to achieving success in auto sales and real estate, and now Mike himself had run a gauntlet to the majors, where he's become an instant celebrity.

"Stardom is a strange thing," Piazza says. "Being recognized is something I've never had to deal with before....I want to sit back and appreciate what I've done, but I can't. The way I see it, once you're done with it, hey, you did it and—boom!—you gotta do it next year and the year after that. It's a never-ending cycle, climbing those stairs to the top. And I don't yet know what the top is."

"This was the first off-season that I could just enjoy laying back. It's good to give a body a break. The season takes a toll."★



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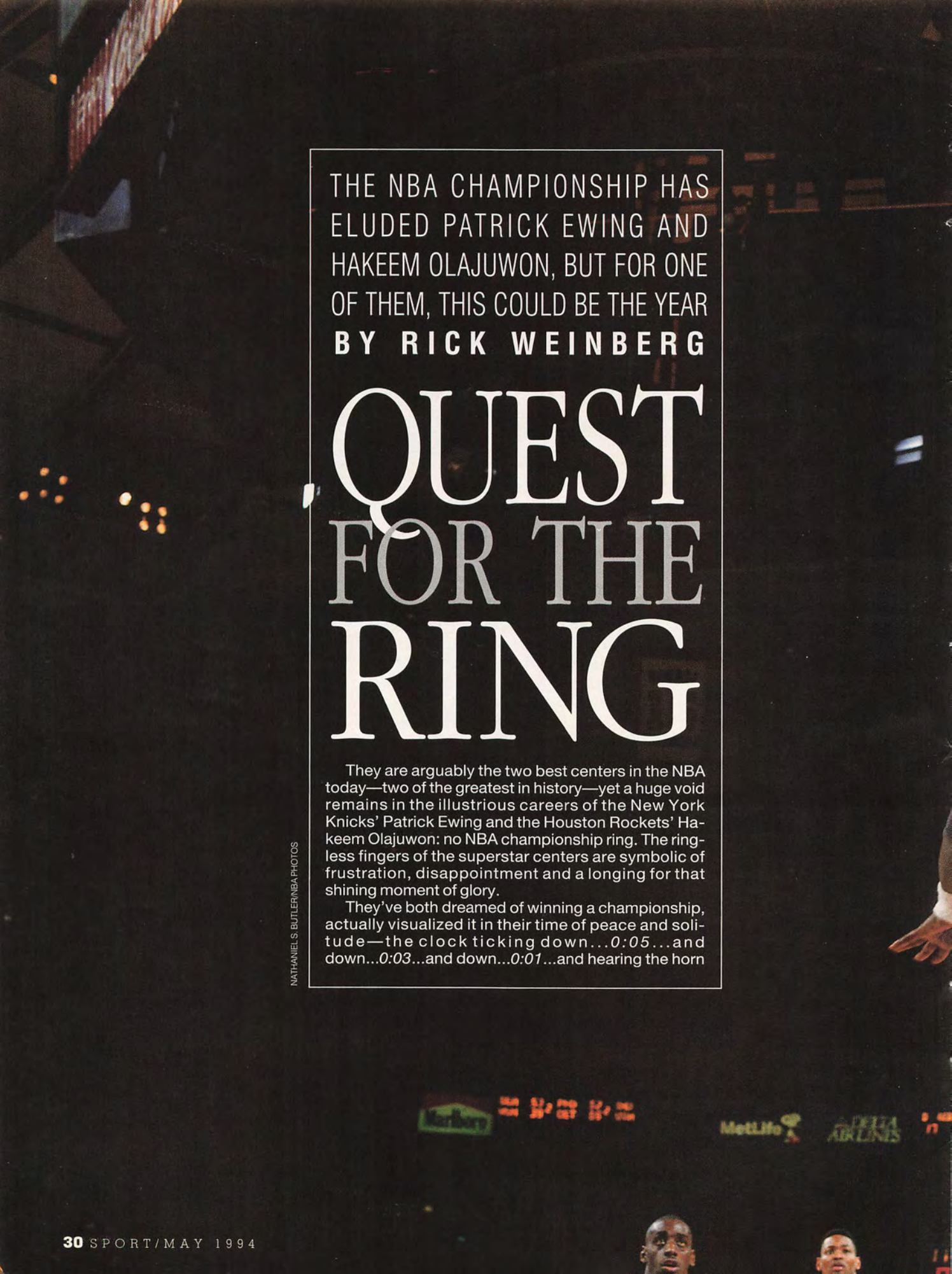
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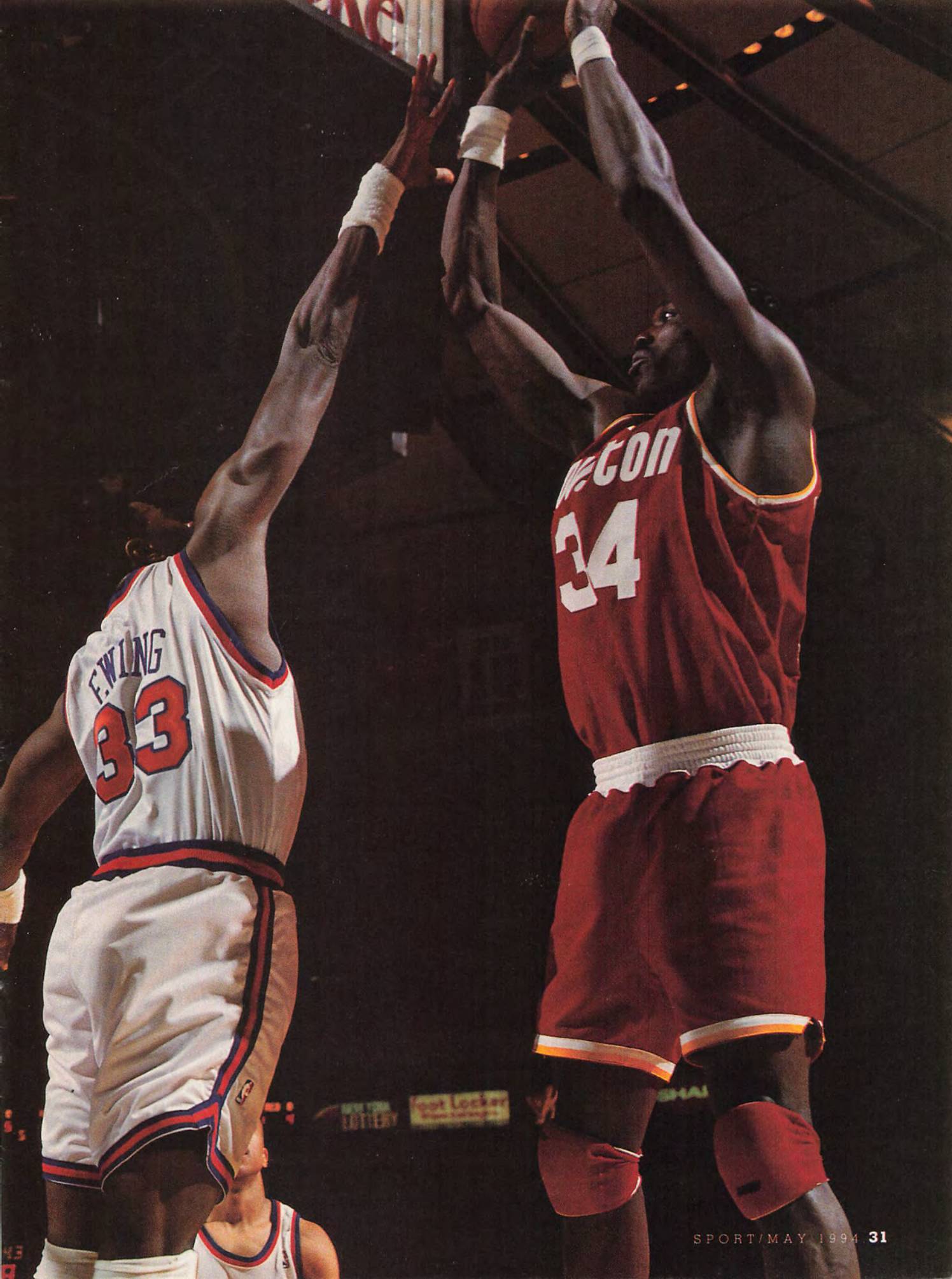
THE NBA CHAMPIONSHIP HAS
ELUDED PATRICK EWING AND
HAKEEM OLAJUWON, BUT FOR ONE
OF THEM, THIS COULD BE THE YEAR
BY RICK WEINBERG

QUEST FOR THE RING

They are arguably the two best centers in the NBA today—two of the greatest in history—yet a huge void remains in the illustrious careers of the New York Knicks' Patrick Ewing and the Houston Rockets' Hakeem Olajuwon: no NBA championship ring. The ringless fingers of the superstar centers are symbolic of frustration, disappointment and a longing for that shining moment of glory.

They've both dreamed of winning a championship, actually visualized it in their time of peace and solitude—the clock ticking down...0:05...and down...0:03...and down...0:01...and hearing the horn

NATHANIEL S. BUTLER/NBA PHOTOS



sound, the stadium exploding into a sea of joyous celebration.

Ewing and Olajuwon have seen themselves thrusting their arms in the air, beaming, looking toward the heavens and thanking the man above, tightly clutching the championship trophy, champagne dripping from their brows, teary-eyed.

Like Michael Jordan did. Like Isaiah Thomas did. Like Magic Johnson and Larry Bird did.

"I can't help but think about it," says Olajuwon.

Neither can Ewing.

"It's natural," says Ewing. "I've been in the league for nine years. I've seen a lot of guys celebrate. But we're a championship-level team. This is the time to capitalize, to go get it. Hopefully, this is the year."

Olajuwon essentially says the same thing—and the irony is that they could collide head-on in June.

But only one can walk away with the jewelry.

Olajuwon has advanced to the NBA Finals once in his 10-year career. That was in 1986, his second season in the league, when the Rockets lost to the Boston Celtics, four games to two.

Ewing has never made a Finals appearance. The closest he's gotten was last year when the Knicks fell to the Chicago Bulls in six games in the Eastern Conference finals.

The prospects of the two noble big men meeting for the championship is intriguing, but much stands in their way, particularly for Olajuwon and the Rockets. There's Charles Barkley and the Phoenix Suns, Shawn Kemp and the Seattle SuperSonics, David Robinson and the San Antonio Spurs.

"Big obstacles," Olajuwon says.

For Ewing and the Knicks, the road to the championship is less hazardous. There's...who? The Michael Jordan-less Bulls? Good team but probably not legitimate title contenders. The Atlanta Hawks? Haven't convinced anyone just yet that they're the real deal. The Orlando Magic? The Charlotte Hornets? Not this year.

The only beast in the East is New York. Ewing speaks cautiously about the prospects of a berth in the Finals—to the media anyway. "He talks like he's already won it," says Spurs guard Sleepy Floyd, who played with Ewing at Georgetown. "He feels they should've won it last year. He talks like there's no doubt

the Knicks will be NBA champions come June."

Publicly, however, Ewing plays it down. "We have a golden opportunity, but we're not thinking that since Michael is gone that we've won any-



"[Ewing] talks like he's already won it. He feels they should've won it last year. He talks like there's no doubt the Knicks will be NBA champions come June."

—Sleepy Floyd, Spurs guard and college teammate of Ewing

thing," he says. "We're not taking anything for granted. We know everyone will be shooting for us."

Time is running out for the two great centers to realize their dreams. Both Ewing and Hakeem are 31. Over the years, young, explosive, dominant centers have popped up all around them, several in just the last

few seasons. Orlando's Shaquille O'Neal and Charlotte's Alonzo Mourning are two of them. Both are in their second season, and their teams are fast becoming championship contenders in the East. There's Dikembe Mutombo of the Denver Nuggets. He's in his third year, and the Nuggets are on the rise in the West.

Then, of course, there's San Antonio's Mr. Robinson. He's three years younger than Ewing and Olajuwon, is in just his fifth season, and the Spurs are only a point guard away from serious title contention.

To be sure, the road to a championship isn't getting easier.

And the window of opportunity for Ewing and Hakeem is shrinking.

And shrinking.

And shrinking.

Ewing remembers the feeling of losing Game 5 of last year's Eastern Conference finals in Madison Square Garden—remembers it all too well.

"Like yesterday," he says.

He recalls the intense sadness, the anger, the fear that the opportunity to win a championship had passed him by.

"I was so down," he says. "I can't put it into words."

Then, after the Knicks were bounced from the playoffs in Game 6, Ewing sat there for a while, in the bowels of Chicago Stadium, wondering.

How could this happen? How could we blow a 2-0 lead?

The vision remains painfully clear of Knicks forward Charles Smith going up and missing, going up and missing, going up one last time and missing again as the clock expired, sending the Bulls into a state of ecstasy and the Knicks into a state of despair.

Ewing sighs, staring ahead blankly. His forehead wrinkles as he begins to speak: "I just hope we get another opportunity. We believe we will, but you never know. Sure, with Michael [Jordan] gone, the door is open a little wider, but..."

Ewing didn't make the playoffs in his first two seasons, and then came a dizzying series of annual early exits. A first-round ouster here, a second-round departure there. One after another.

But times have changed. The Knicks have a suffocating, championship-style defense, a top-notch head coach in Pat Riley, and with the

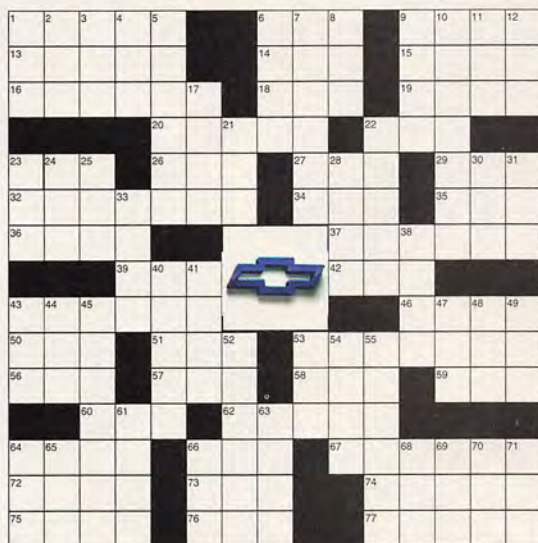
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Puzzle

By Stanley Newman

"MAY MISCELLANY"



1. Sports trivia, for example
6. Speedometer reading: Abbr.
9. Practice catching flies
13. He hit .398 in '29
14. Bugner beater in '75
15. Mata _____
16. Dog-racing lure
18. Rhode Island footballer
19. Kind of vaccine
20. "THE MOST DEPENDABLE, LONGEST-LASTING TRUCKS"
22. NHLer
23. Stabler's alma mater: Abbr.
26. Snakelike fish
27. Stat for Glavine
29. Loose _____ goose: 2 wds.
32. Stadium-roof overhangs
34. Compete in the 440
35. AL or NL team, on the scoreboard
36. Reduces the roster
37. Wimbledon champ in '89
39. See 72 Across
42. Incoming-plane info: Abbr.
43. He beat Jersey Joe in '49 and '51
46. Hit the ball hard
50. "No, _____ thousand times no!": 2 wds.
51. Aptitude for music
53. First pro bowler with a \$100,000 year
56. A DiMaggio brother
57. "I _____ Rock" (Simon and Garfunkel tune): 2 wds.
58. Negative vote
59. Heisman winner Harmon
60. Spectacular _____ ('79 Derby winner)
62. NBAer, for short
64. '80s Astros shortstop
66. Professor's degree: Abbr.
67. '48 Summer Olympics locale
72. With 39 Across, U.S. basketball coach at the '68 Olympics
73. Great, to today's teens
74. Seven-time Gold Glove catcher
75. Yale athletes
76. "_____ bodkins!"
77. Raise horses

Down

1. "Bedtime _____ Bonzo"
2. Dentist's organization: Abbr.
3. Corn-kernel holder
4. Clumsy boat
5. Hit an errand drive
6. Mr. Throneberry
7. Three-time Masters champ
8. That guy
9. Sneaker or cleat
10. Five-time Kentucky Derby winner
11. Coach Parseghian
12. Teammate of Pee Wee and Jackie
17. "My country, 'tis of _____"
21. Overhead trains
22. Figure-skating champ Lynn
23. The Dolphins' conference
24. Batting coach Charlie
25. Perform on stage
28. Waddell of Cooperstown
30. Pronoun for a yacht
31. Football's contents
33. Korea's continent
38. AL batting champ in '61
40. Sandwich need
41. Garden of Eden dweller
43. Pass receiver
44. "The Bronx _____" (Sparky Lyle book)
45. Ice-resurfacing machine
47. Unimproved land
48. Numero _____
49. Workout place
52. Wide receiver-turned-broadcaster
53. Advice columnist Landers
54. Catch stealing
55. Pete Rose's hero: 2 wds.
61. Signs a contract
63. Pimlico posting
64. Useful article
65. '60s reliever Reniff
66. The "P" in PGA
68. Lillehammer's country: Abbr.
69. Female deer
70. Eddie Glacomin's uniform number
71. Actor Beatty

See page 85 for Chevrolet Truck SPORTword Puzzle answers.

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Time is running out on Ewing and Olajuwon in their quest for an NBA championship, and a group of hot young centers promises to make it that much tougher for the aging vets.

Shaquille O'Neal and Alonzo Mourning already are planning their championship parties. Dikembe Mutombo also envisions a title, as does David Robinson. Yet when all four were confronted with the prospect of swooping in and stealing the coveted title that has eluded Ewing and Olajuwon, each admitted that the Knicks and Rockets are closer to championships than they are.

"I see us winning a championship in two, maybe three years," says Shaq. "We're still a player or two away. We're the team of the future, and the future is near. We've got to get a power forward, someone like Horace Grant, and look out."

Mourning says the Hornets are also two, three years away from a championship. "We're more than halfway there," he says. "With Larry [Johnson], me, Dell [Curry], Hersey [Hawkins], Muggsy [Bogues], we've got a nice young core of players. We're not far away."

Ditto for the Nuggets, who have a potentially dynamite front line of Mutombo and forwards LaPhonso Ellis and Rodney Rogers, along with sharpshooting point guard Mahmoud Addul-Rauf.

"Mahmoud has been sensational," says Mutombo. "And in a year or so, our frontcourt will be unstoppable. I don't see anyone being able to cover us."

And Robinson? He wasn't thrilled to see Avery Johnson defect to the Warriors via free agency, nor was he pleased to see Derek Harper go to the Knicks instead of to his club.

"We've got championship talent on this team," Robinson says. "What hurts is that you only get a few chances to get a ring. We had a chance to get to the Finals last year and it hurt to lose that opportunity. You can't blow the chances you have."

You don't have to tell Ewing and Olajuwon.
—Rick Weinberg

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acquisition of Derek Harper, they have a championship-caliber point guard.

But they don't have a championship offense, and that might lead to their demise. Yet some Knicks believe this will be the year Ewing straps them on his back and carries them to the championship.

"I think Patrick is going to be a terror in May and June," says Knicks guard Doc Rivers, sidelined for the season with a knee injury. "He's never won a championship, never won an MVP. He was ousted from the starting lineup in last year's All-Star Game [by Shaq]. He doesn't feel he's gotten the respect he deserves, and the only way he feels he'll get that respect is by winning a championship.

"Look out for Patrick in June. I'm not sure anyone will be able to stop him."

It was so long ago, the Rockets' venture into the NBA Finals. So long ago that Olajuwon can hardly recall those days—when Ralph Sampson teamed with Hakeem to form the Twin Towers, when Robert Reid and Lewis Lloyd started in the backcourt.

"When I went to the Finals that first time, I was only in my second year," Olajuwon says, "and I figured I'd get there three, four more times. I haven't been back since. I almost feel like I wasn't there, that it didn't happen. I was so young. I didn't appreciate it then as much as I'd appreciate it now. Because now I know it's a rare opportunity that doesn't come easy."

Olajuwon was unstoppable in the '86 Finals, averaging 25 points, 12 rebounds and more than three blocked shots, including an NBA-record eight blocks against Boston in Game 5 that enabled Houston to cut the Celtics' lead in games to 3-2. But Bird, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, Dennis Johnson et al. were too much for the Rockets, who were eliminated in Game 6 at Boston Garden.

From then on, the Rockets' plight has mirrored the Knicks'. Early play-off exits, one after another. But last year, with Olajuwon signed to a four-year, \$26 million contract extension and the arrival of Rudy Tomjanovich as head coach, the Rockets put it together and emerged as a powerhouse.

They won 41 of their last 52 games last season and came within a victory of reaching the Western Conference finals. Then they shot out of

the gate this season, shocking the basketball world with a 21-1 start, and Olajuwon was being called the best player in the game, the front-runner for the NBA's MVP Award.

"We've got a good chance to win

philosophy and emphasis on the team concept. We're a true team, not a bunch of individuals thrown on the court, chasing a ball. We're really together. We play in a total team concept, and those kinds of teams win."

There are several reasons why the Rockets are serious title contenders: the steady play of guards Vern Maxwell and Kenny Smith, the aggressive rebounding prowess of Otis Thorpe, and Tomjanovich. But at the top of the list is Hakeem.

"Not only is he the best big man in the game, he's the best player," says Sonics coach George Karl.

"The thing about Hakeem," says Tomjanovich, "is that he dominates at both ends of the court. Offensively, he's unstoppable, with a variety of moves. Defensively, people are afraid to drive the lane. He's a monster shot blocker."

Most importantly, though, Hakeem now trusts his supporting cast, enabling him to pass out of double- and triple-teams instead of forcing the shot. When the defense collapses on him now, he flips the ball out to the arc, where Maxwell and Smith can drill three-pointers.

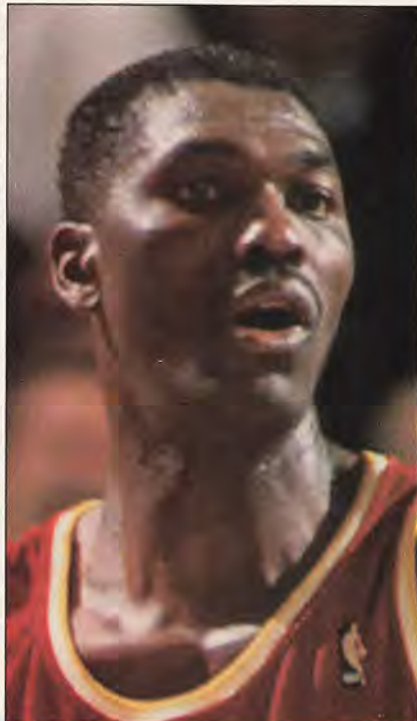
"That really changed us as a team," says Maxwell. "We all got into the act. Playing was fun again, challenging. Seattle and Phoenix are great basketball teams, but we've proven we're as good. We believe we can win the championship, and that's the first step in doing it."

If Olajuwon and Ewing again come up empty this season, and if their careers should end without a ring, what then? "It'll hurt," says Ewing, "but that's not the way a player should be defined. There are many great players who haven't won a championship. They're still great players. They were just not fortunate to have won a championship."

Says Olajuwon: "After losing the Finals in 1986, I said, 'Next time I go, we win.' And I meant it."

Forgive Olajuwon if he's a little tired of losing in the big game. At the University of Houston, he went to the Final Four three straight times, losing every time—twice in the NCAA title game.

So when it comes to this small matter of winning a championship, Olajuwon understandably gets a little riled. "I don't even want to think about not ever winning an NBA championship," he says. "The emotional pain would be too much."★



NATHANIEL S. BUTLER/NBA PHOTOS

"I don't even want to think about not ever winning an NBA championship. The emotional pain would be too much."

—Hakeem Olajuwon

it this year," Olajuwon says, "but if we don't make it, we'll have just as good a chance—or better—next year. I'm 31, but I feel great—like I'm 25. I've never suffered a serious injury, I've matured as a player, my game has grown. We've got a great coach who turned us into a championship-level club with his defensive

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AUTHENTICS

ON A NEW TEAM IN A NEW LEAGUE, FIRST BASEMAN WILL CLARK IS REJUVENATED AND DETERMINED TO BOUNCE BACK FROM A SUBPAR SEASON **WILL TO WIN**

It never has taken much to get Will Clark focused on the game of baseball. His demeanor between the lines ranges from driven to ornery. His stare is so menacing, it has a name. "The Nuschler Look" is what former teammate Mike Krukow dubbed it, for it is as uncommon as Clark's middle name.

And now Clark, in a career that already has included five All-Star Game appearances, two Silver Slugger Awards, a Gold Glove and two trips to the postseason, has a bundle of reasons for rededication: a new team in a new league; a new ballpark complete with a made-to-order right-field porch to christen; a new marriage; and perhaps most importantly, a clean bill of health. For although Clark takes the rap for a 1993 season in which he posted career-low power totals, knee, elbow and wrist injuries cost him 30 games and who knows how much productivity.

Not that Clark ever has lacked motivation, "but all those factors combined can do nothing but help me," he says. "I'm excited. I'm a veteran, but then again, I feel like a rookie again. I'm rejuvenated."

But if you're expecting a bridges-burning diatribe against the San Francisco Giants—who offered only token resistance to the departure of a Bay Area icon while dropping huge deals upon Matt Williams, Robby Thompson and Mark Portugal—forget it. For all his past tiffs that created media stirs, Clark has learned well in the Leigh Steinberg/Jeff Moorad school of client decorum.

Nor will Clark get into the prediction business when it comes to his offensive output in his new setting—with the Texas Rangers and their new stadium, The Ballpark in Arlington. He isn't about to say he'll match or beat the totals of the man he replaced at first base in Texas, Rafael Palmeiro, whose 37 homers and 105 RBI in 1993 look suspiciously like career-year totals. For that matter, Clark is refraining from verbal retaliation against Palmeiro, who in a regrettable snit following Clark's signing with Texas, called his former Mississippi State teammate "a low life."

No, Clark is traveling the high road to Texas, which is about a

nine-hour drive from his hometown of New Orleans. Healthy, fit and thrilled with his new surroundings, he is confident that his performance will answer any and all questions.

"I'm not coming in and saying I'm going to better anybody's numbers," Clark says. "I think I'm capable of having a consistent year all-around. Hopefully, that results in us having a winning year. Then I'll feel like I did my job. I was with the Giants for eight years, and in six of them we had winning seasons. We got to one World Series and two playoffs, and we won 103 games last year. I see that happening here. We have the potential. We've got a chance to win."

If Clark won't talk much about his chances for a personal rebound, others will. Physical training guru Mackie Shilstone supervised Clark in an intense off-season regimen that included lifting dumbbells for the first time. Shilstone says their sessions, which were sandwiched around Clark's Jan. 22 marriage to Lisa White, reminded him of old times.

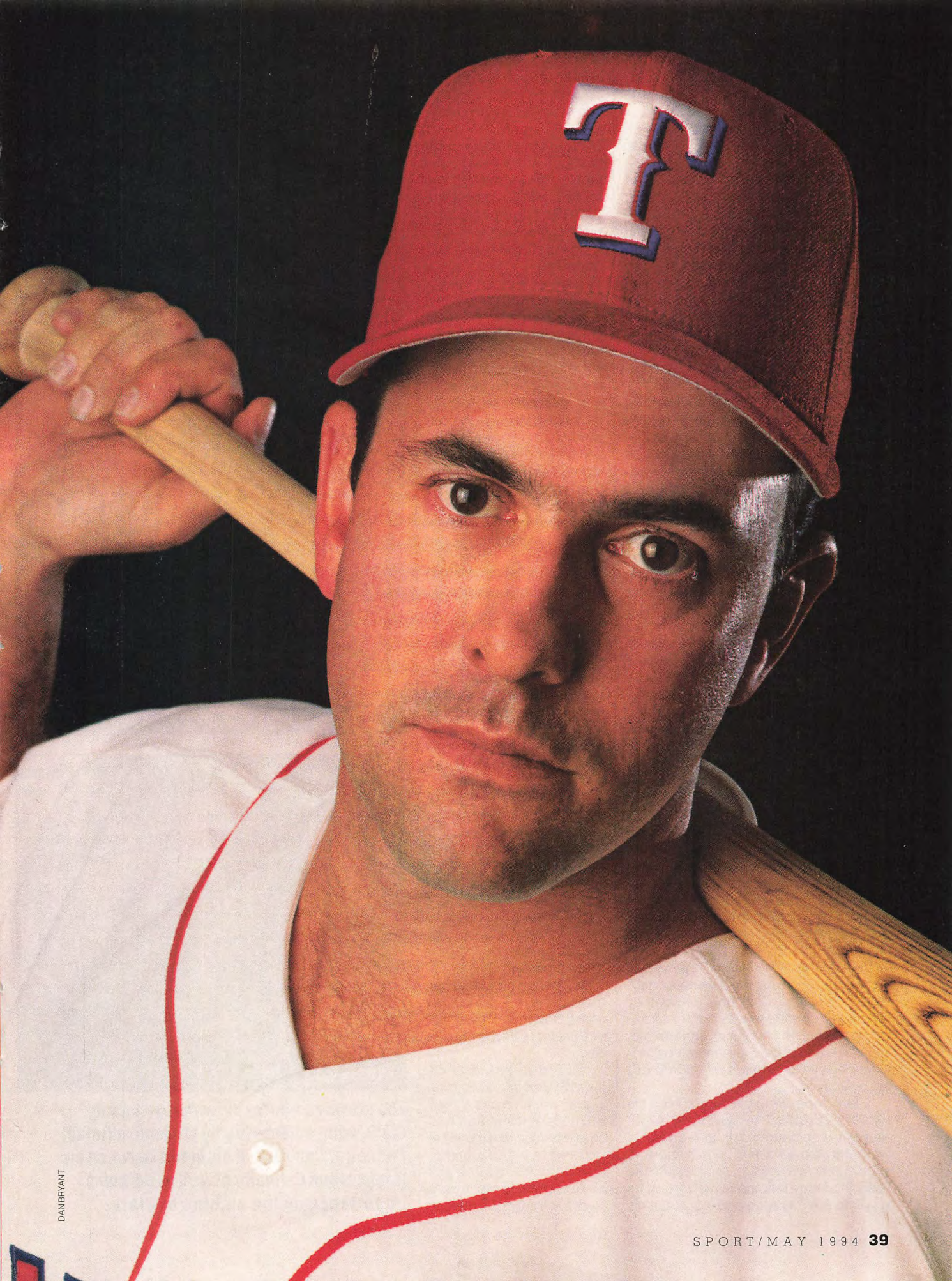
"I think Will is driven," Shilstone says. "I think this is a rebirth. He's always taken the time to get himself ready. You're talking about somebody who knows what he has to do. He's the kind of employee you want. It's not the money with him."

Los Angeles Dodgers scout Mel Didier, a cagey Cajun going on his 44th year in baseball, seconds Shilstone's thumbs-up diagnosis for a Clark recovery. And Didier has known Clark since Clark's days at Jesuit High School in New Orleans.

"He's gonna do good," Didier says. "Put that down, buddy. He's that kind of guy. He's one of those guys like Barry Bonds. You may not like him, but he wants to be the best that's ever played. Will has that kind of makeup. If he doesn't do what the Rangers expect, it won't be because of a lack of effort. I really believe they'll get his best shot."

Nobody is hoping so more than Rangers president Tom Schieffer and general manager Tom Grieve. Faced with the uncertainty of re-signing Palmeiro, Schieffer and Grieve put out \$30 million for a 30-year-old first baseman who has averaged 15 homers and 73 RBI over the last two injury-interrupted seasons.

B Y T O N Y D E M A R C O



Over the same period, Palmeiro has hit 59 homers and driven in 190 runs. There definitely is room to question the decision, especially if the Rangers don't win the stripped-down American League West.

Trying to diffuse the inevitable Rafael-Will comparisons, Grieve says: "This was a high-profile, newsworthy situation. People have to write and talk about it. But there was no ulterior motive here. It wasn't that we wanted Will over Raffy. In no way does our signing Will Clark indicate that we like him more than Raffy. We were signing a player we knew we could sign so we wouldn't end up without a player [if Palmeiro left through free agency]. We were \$6 million apart with Raffy and there was no indication at that time that we could sign him for less than \$32.5 million. Therefore, we proceeded with serious negotiations with Will."

Grieve points to Clark's .379 batting average in the season's final five weeks—after Clark came off the disabled list and while the Giants and Braves were locked in perhaps the last great all-or-nothing division-title race—as erasing doubts in his mind about Clark.

"When the chips were down, he came back and played," Grieve says. "For these kind of dollars, that's the guy we're expecting. These aren't the kind of dollars you spend on a guy who hits 12 homers and drives in 70 runs."

"Not that he has anything to prove, but that's what players feel. They want to show the league, their new teammates and the fans that they're good players. If a guy has pride, the rest will take care of itself. I think he's got a lot of pride."

Still, there was that alarmingly slow start in 1993 for Clark, who, albeit snake-bitten by bad luck with balls hit right at people, hit just .218 with one homer and 19 RBI in his first 170 at-bats. But from May 28 on, he put up numbers that were more Clark-like—.318, 13 homers, 56 runs, 54 RBI in 321 at-bats—despite missing 24 of 35 games between Aug. 14 and Sept. 22. Extrapolated over a 600 at-bat season, those totals become .318, 24 homers, 105 runs and 101 RBI. But the bottom line on 1993 read: .283, 82 runs, 14 homers, 73 RBI.

"I'm taking all the blame," Clark says. "Nobody else swung the bat except me." As for the injuries, Clark only will say they cost him a chance to stay hot for an extended period. But his agent, Jeff Moorad, says: "If ever a player was frustrated by injuries and health issues, it was Will. Those are behind him."

Clark got a clean bill of health on his right knee (strained medial collateral ligament, bruised kneecap), as well as his wrist and elbow from Dr. James Andrews shortly after last season. And despite the Giants' private sniping (which found its way into the Bay Area papers) about his

declining conditioning habits, Clark says he played all of last season at 195 pounds, the same weight he carried in 1989 when he hit .333.

"I guarantee you some of that stuff got leaked [to the media]," Clark says. "If you hit .300, with 25 homers and 100 RBI, I don't care who you are, they won't say anything to you. But I just didn't do my job."

Giants general manager Bob Quinn would offer only this on the matter: "I'm not going to touch that one. It's too difficult an area to single out. It becomes speculative. I have a tough time dealing with speculative issues."

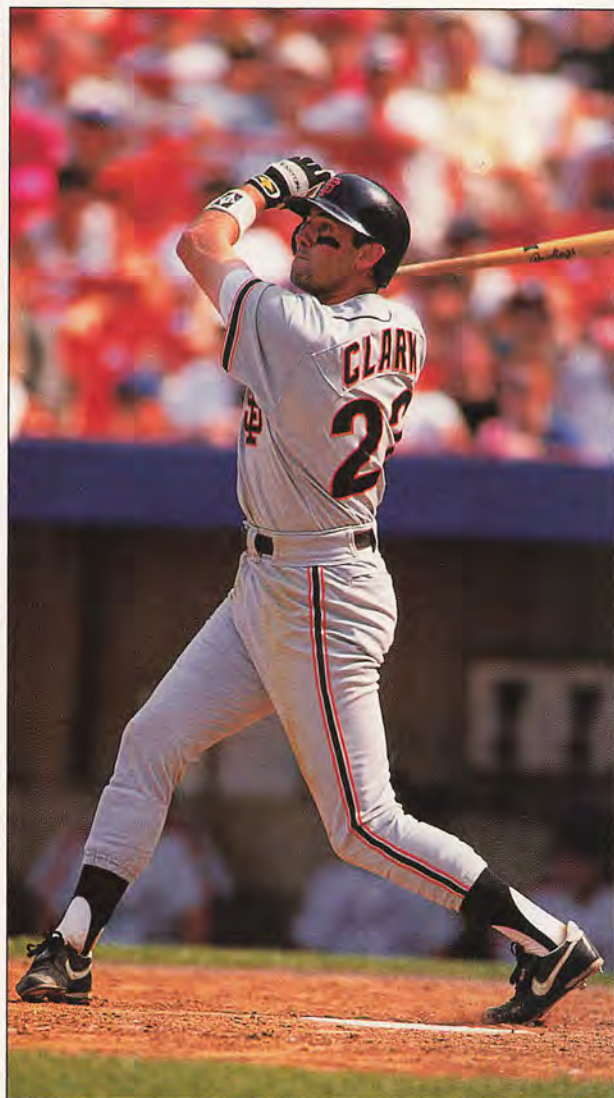
As he has done in past winters, Clark has put himself under the care of Shilstone. This time, they concentrated on explosive training, the medicine ball, rotational work and dumbbells to build strength and endurance. Shilstone says Clark hasn't lost anything in the area of determination.

"He said he wanted to add some power and reduce some body fat," Shilstone says. "If he has a nemesis, it's keeping his body fat in line. We want to give him that extra five yards so that those balls that dropped at the warning track last year will turn into home runs."

Says Grieve: "At this stage, Will's career can go south or north. The No. 1 thing is his commitment to conditioning. We're convinced he's willing to make that commitment. We had a good feel when we talked to him....When you get to age 30, you have to do things a little differently."

But before his career begins anew in Texas, first some closure on his eight-year tenure in San Francisco.

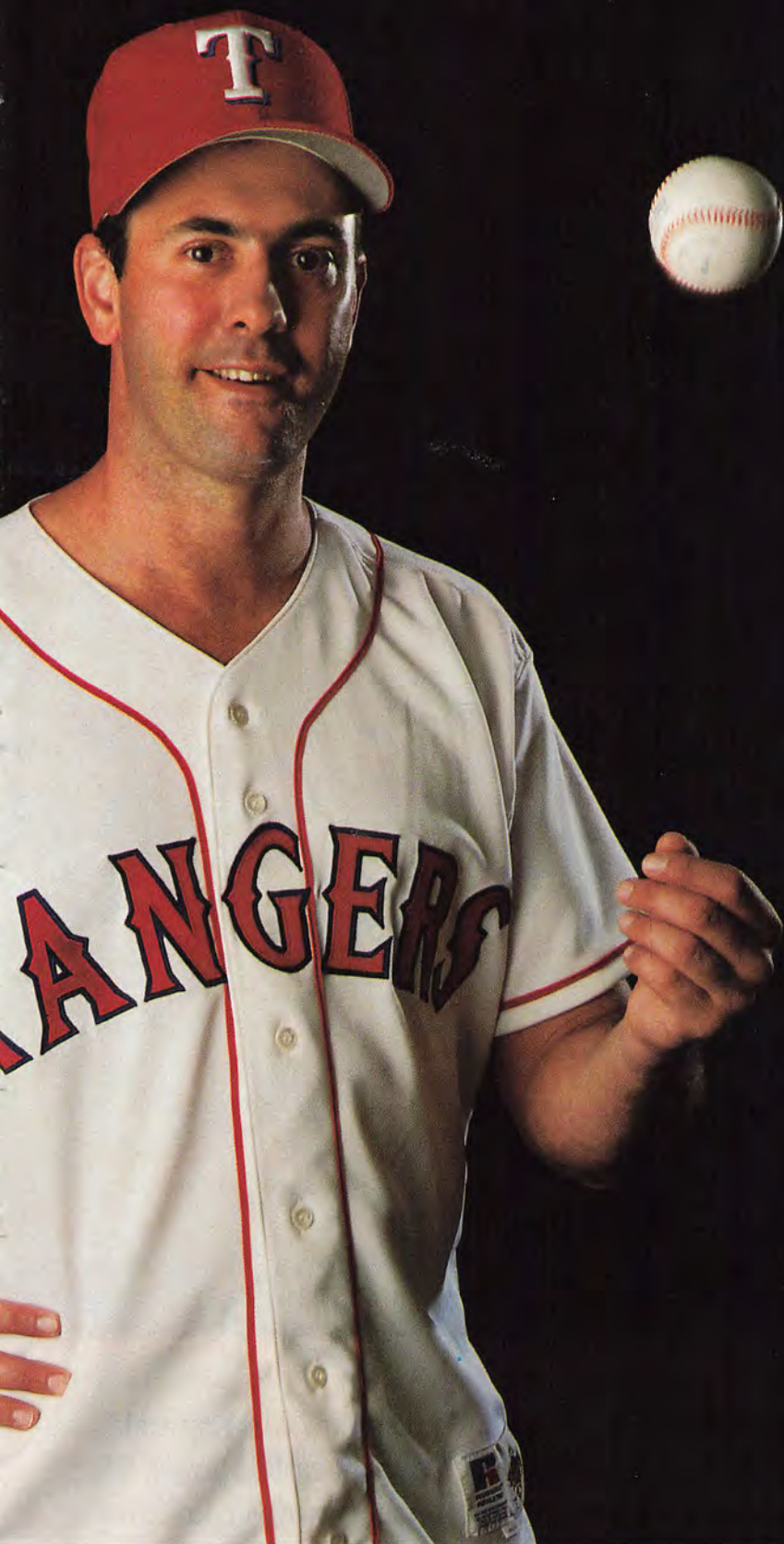
Clark says the Giants' offer of \$15 million over three years "wasn't a bad offer." But he is quick to add that he felt he deserved more. He also says "it is a fair assumption" that if Bob Lurie still owned the Giants and Al Rosen still sat in the general



The pressure's on for the sweet-swinging Clark, who replaces highly productive Rafael Palmeiro. Contractual problems between the Rangers and Palmeiro placed even more importance on the signing of Clark.

TOM DIPACE

COURTESY OF THE TEXAS RANGERS



DAN BRYANT

manager's seat, Clark would have been signed last spring.

"Al didn't dillydally," Clark says. "He wouldn't let the core of that team get away."

On Quinn's behalf, it must be said that the Giants should be able to win the realigned NL West without Clark. And as a smaller-market club, their offer had limits. With \$90 million-plus in guaranteed dollars doled out for Williams, Bonds, Portugal and Thompson, there was only so much to go around. Quinn had precious little to say publicly during the negotiations and hasn't altered his stance much now that Clark's departure has been hashed and rehashed in the Bay Area media.

"We were not prepared to go beyond three years," Quinn says. "As to why, we don't want to get into that. We've made ourselves clear. We wish him every success. Let's just leave it at that."

Another thing that still sticks in Clark's craw concerns the night in September when he came off the disabled list. Clark didn't know the club had reactivated him until the fourth inning of a game, when manager Dusty Baker strolled down the bench to inform him to be ready to pinch-hit later. "To not tell a guy he's off the DL until the fourth inning, well, let's just say that was on the forgetful side," Clark says.

Speaking of forgiving and forgetting, Clark and new teammate Jose Canseco long ago dismissed as tongue-in-cheek banter their verbal war of words while they shared the Bay Area superstar status in the late 1980s. In case you've forgotten, Canseco called Clark "a three-toed sloth." When Clark was introduced to the Metroplex media last November, who else but Canseco was present.

But Clark is still waiting to hear from Palmeiro, whose only apology has come in print.

"I'm not the one who's supposed to make the first contact," Clark says. "He was very frustrated. I can sort of understand the remarks, but they were made at a bad time. Ralph and I have been friends a long time. We were teammates, we've been through a lot. This was his first incident. I had some incidents earlier in my career. I found out at an earlier date that when things get emotional, you need to hold your temper a little more. We'll have plenty of chances to talk. I plan on being on first base quite a bit, and I'm sure he does too."★

Tony DeMarco is a national baseball writer for the *Denver Post*.

The new Ranger in town is Clark, who is healthy and looking to match his pre-injury production.



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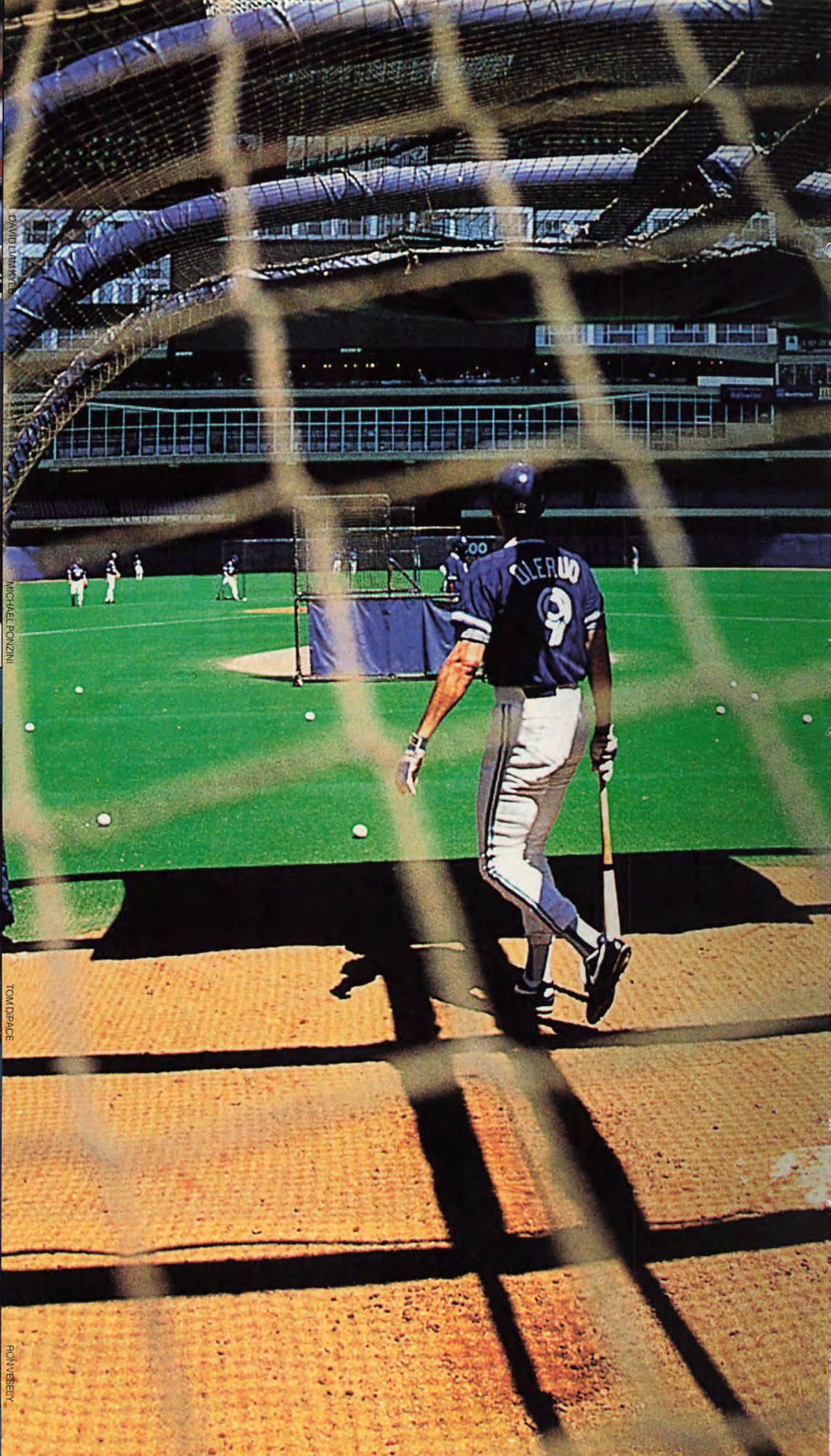
Joe Carter



Roberto Alomar



Cito Gaston

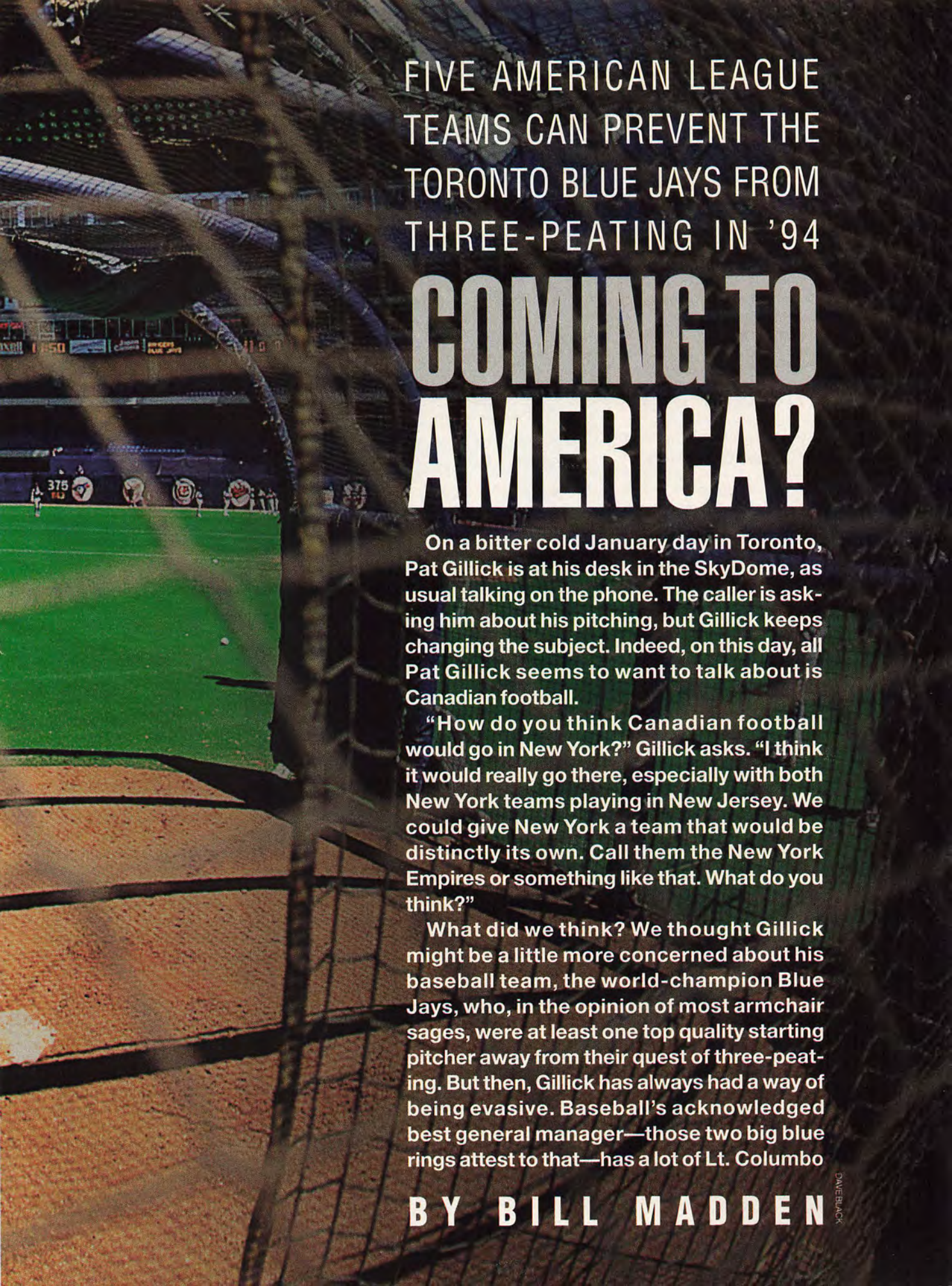


DAVID L. HARRIS

MICHAEL PONZINI

TOM DIPACE

RON VESSEY



FIVE AMERICAN LEAGUE
TEAMS CAN PREVENT THE
TORONTO BLUE JAYS FROM
THREE-PEATING IN '94

COMING TO AMERICA?

On a bitter cold January day in Toronto, Pat Gillick is at his desk in the SkyDome, as usual talking on the phone. The caller is asking him about his pitching, but Gillick keeps changing the subject. Indeed, on this day, all Pat Gillick seems to want to talk about is Canadian football.

"How do you think Canadian football would go in New York?" Gillick asks. "I think it would really go there, especially with both New York teams playing in New Jersey. We could give New York a team that would be distinctly its own. Call them the New York Empires or something like that. What do you think?"

What did we think? We thought Gillick might be a little more concerned about his baseball team, the world-champion Blue Jays, who, in the opinion of most armchair sages, were at least one top quality starting pitcher away from their quest of three-peating. But then, Gillick has always had a way of being evasive. Baseball's acknowledged best general manager—those two big blue rings attest to that—has a lot of Lt. Columbo

BY BILL MADDEN

DAVE BLACK

in him. He talks as if he doesn't know what he's doing when all the while he knows precisely what he's doing.

Could be, too, that Gillick was serious about running a Canadian Football League team in New York. After all, he's announced his retirement effective after this season, and at 54 it's hard to imagine he could have run out of challenges in life.

When pressed, he admits that going out on a third straight championship is the ultimate challenge now. However, five American League teams—the Baltimore Orioles, Cleveland Indians, Seattle Mariners, Texas Rangers and Chicago White Sox—might prevent Gillick from leaving the game on a winning note; they all have the potential—on paper anyway—to dethrone the Blue Jays, and Gillick knows it.

"We're not as good as we were in 1993," he says, "just as in 1993 we weren't as good as we were in 1992. I know we have to get a pitcher. I also know that performance-wise we can't expect [John] Olerud to lead the league in hitting again, or [Paul] Molitor to have 111 RBIs again, and it could be tough for Pat Hentgen to win 19 games again. That's the challenge for me. I'd be lying if I said I didn't want really badly to go out a winner, to be the first team since the A's in 1972-'73-'74 to three-peat."

Since becoming the Blue Jays' executive vice president of baseball operations in 1984, Gillick has patiently and skillfully built them into the most successful franchise in the game, on the field and at the box office. What he takes most pride in is his belief that, because of the deep and talented farm system he will leave behind, the best Toronto teams may be yet to come. For that reason, his efforts to fortify his starting pitching rotation had stalled as he instead thought wistfully about Canadian football.

It would be easy for Gillick to pry away a Pete Harnisch from Houston or an Andy Benes from San Diego if he were willing to trade outfielder Shawn Green, third baseman Howard Battle, catcher Carlos Delgado or pitcher Jose Silva, all four "can't miss" prospects with arrival dates of 1995 or sooner.

"As much as I want to win again this year, I'm not going to do anything crazy like trading [last year's top pitching prospect Steve] Karsay for [a six-week rental of] Rickey Henderson," Gillick says. "I wouldn't want to do well in 1994 at the expense of finishing fourth or fifth the year after I'm gone."

As Gillick knows, in order to win you have to get surprises from within such as Hentgen's 19 victories last year. As it is, he is counting on his farm system—particularly 20-year-old shortstop Alex Gonzalez, who's in line to replace Tony Fernandez—to supplement the '94 team after a second straight off-season of massive payroll slashing.

"A year ago, we let [Dave] Winfield,

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Can anyone stop the Blue Jays? Stats, Inc. has come up with an all-star team that put a hurtin' on the defending champs the last two years.

T H E H I T T E R S

NAME	AVG.	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB
C—MIKE STANLEY	.309	55	6	17	2	0	2	7	0
1B—WALLY JOYNER	.370	73	15	27	8	1	2	11	5
2B—CARLOS BAERGA	.362	105	17	38	8	0	3	22	3
3B—KEVIN SEITZER	.356	59	12	21	5	0	0	8	2
SS—SCOTT FLETCHER	.373	59	21	22	7	1	1	10	3
OF—ALBERT BELLE	.333	102	18	34	5	0	8	28	2
OF—KENNY LOFTON	.370	73	20	27	2	2	0	5	15
OF—GREG VAUGHN	.315	92	15	29	4	0	8	25	4
DH—HAROLD BAINES	.392	74	10	29	4	0	3	17	0

(Minimum 50 at-bats)

T H E P I T C H E R S

NAME	W-L	ERA	IP	H	ER	BB	K
FRANK VIOLA	2-1	1.62	39.0	24	7	15	26
MARK GUBICZA	4-0	1.88	24.0	20	5	9	16
ALEX FERNANDEZ	4-1	1.88	38.1	28	8	6	25
KEVIN APPIER	3-1	2.10	34.1	25	8	11	27
FERNANDO VALENZUELA	2-0	2.30	31.1	27	8	9	10
CHRIS BOSIO	4-1	2.31	50.2	38	13	15	31
JIM ABBOTT	2-3	2.33	38.2	34	10	9	29
CHUCK FINLEY	1-1	2.33	27.0	25	7	10	16
CAL ELDRED	1-2	2.55	24.2	21	7	3	13
KENNY ROGERS	2-0	2.70	26.2	22	8	12	22

(Minimum 20 innings pitched)

[Candy] Maldonado, [Jimmy] Key and [Tom] Henke go and brought in [Dave] Stewart and Molitor," Gillick says. "I hated letting Key in particular go since he was with us his entire career. But the economics of baseball today dictate that we can't do everything we want. Otherwise our payroll would be at \$55 million instead of \$45 million. Because we let Fernandez go and didn't re-sign [Jack] Morris this winter, we've got about \$3.2 million budgeted for a pitcher."

Nevertheless, Gillick chose not to spend that money on free agents, preferring instead to bide his time until spring training to make the deal he knows he has to make. By contrast, his principal rivals in the American League East, the Orioles, invested more than \$40 million in the free-agent market with the signings of first baseman Rafael Palmeiro, third baseman Chris Sabo and pitchers Sid Fernandez and Lee Smith.

The Orioles justified the high price of being competitive with the Blue Jays on the basis of their payroll still being nowhere

near Gillick's trimmed-down \$45 million.

"Our new owners didn't buy the ballclub just to own a ballclub," says Orioles general manager Roland Hemond. "They bought it to be competitive for a championship."

Which, on paper anyway, the Orioles appear to be. They have addressed their two most critical and longstanding deficiencies—left-handed power and an offensive third baseman. They are convinced that Palmeiro, who hit a career-high 37 homers for the Rangers last year, will provide the punch they have been missing from the left side since they started playing in Camden Yards. There is little question the Orioles have not taken advantage of their own ballpark, in which the right field fence is only 318 feet away. In the two years of Camden Yards' existence, only three players—Mickey Tettleton, Kevin Reimer and Lee Stevens—have homered into the Eutaw Street corridor between the right-field fence and the restored warehouse where the Orioles' executive offices are located; not one was an Oriole. Last

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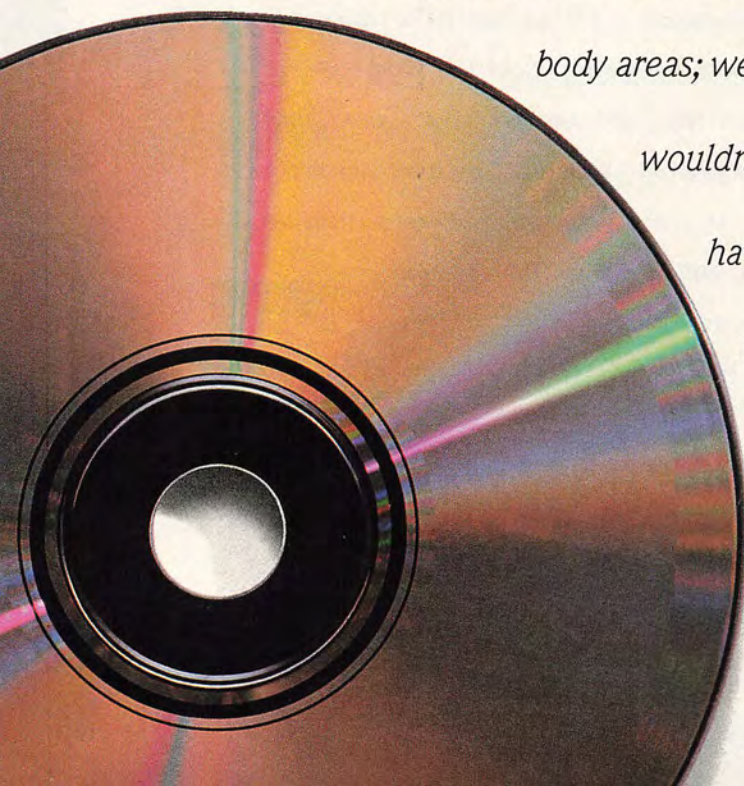
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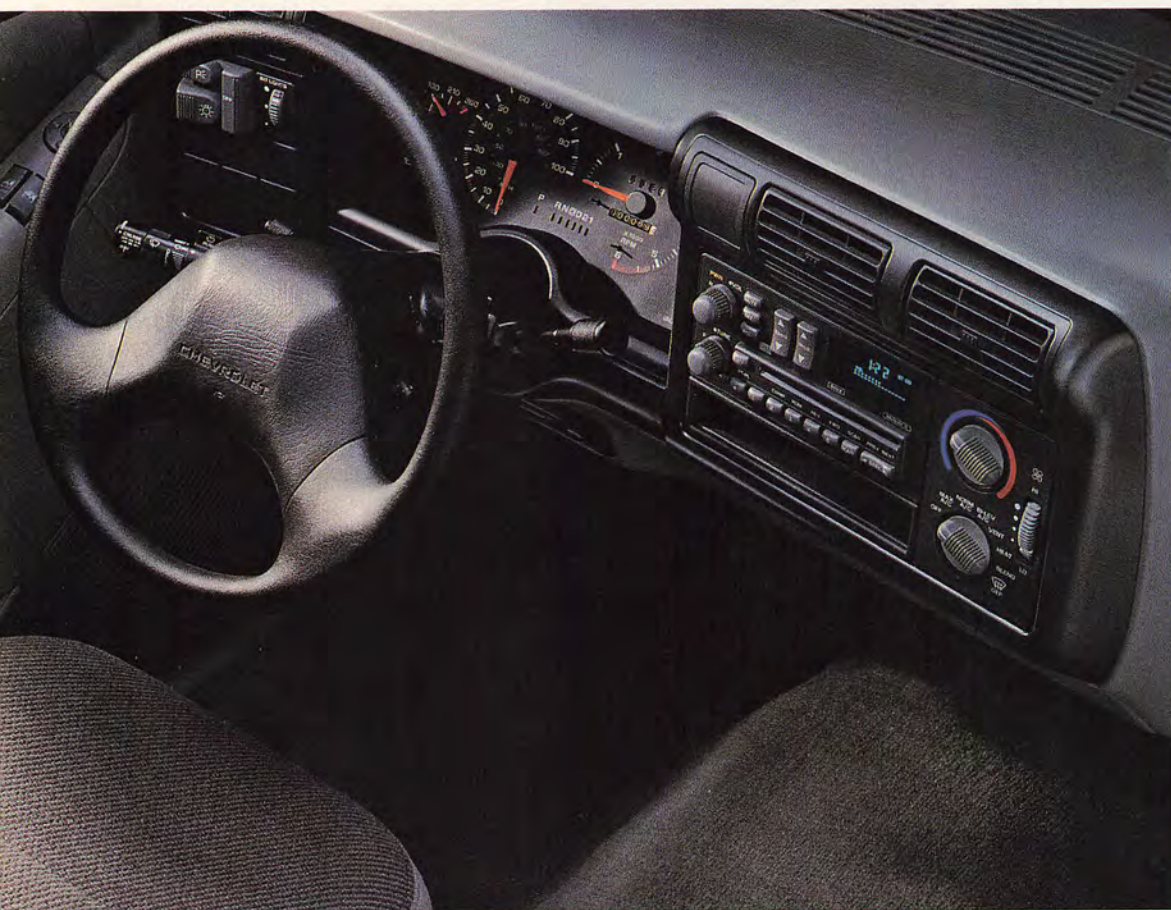
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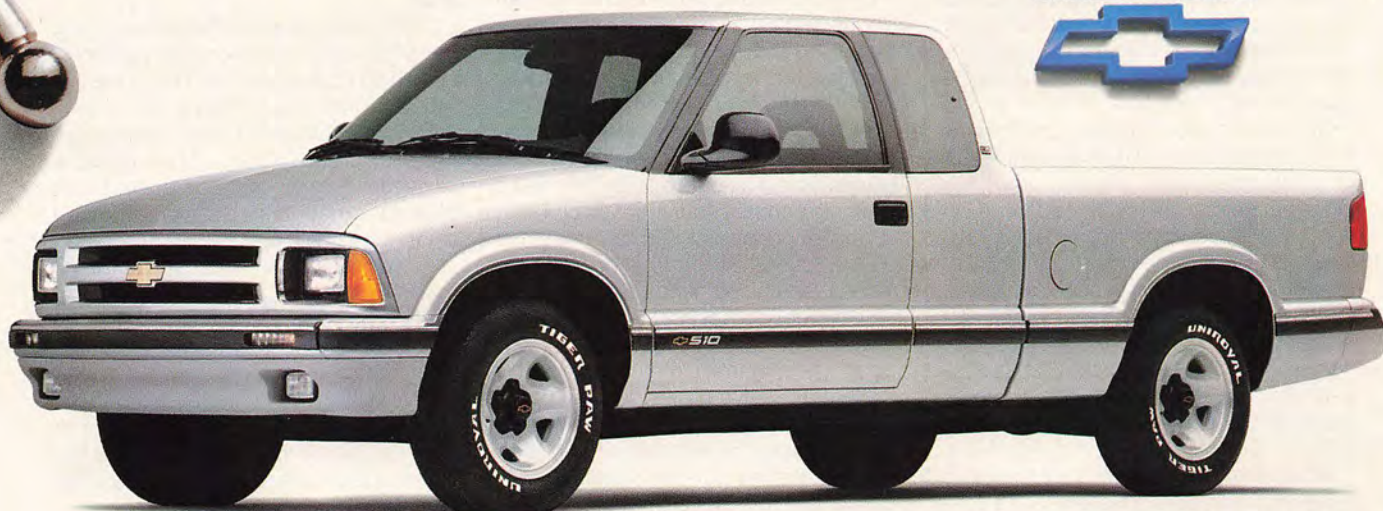
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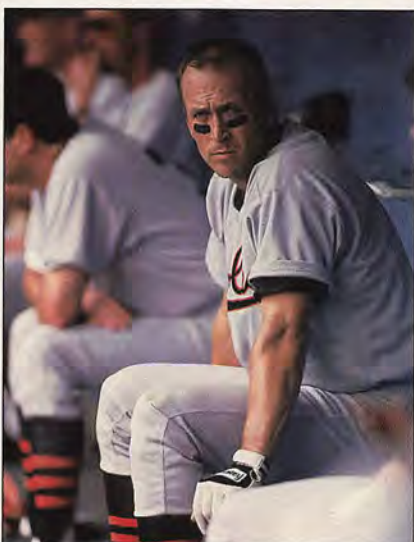
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RON VESLEY



TOM PRACE



DAVID LAM KYLE

Off-season moves by the White Sox, Indians and Orioles have given hope to Jack McDowell (far left), Albert Belle (top right) and Cal Ripken Jr. that their teams can unseat the Blue Jays for the title.

year, the Orioles were outhomered 49-33 to right field.

"Harold Baines was our only left-handed power hitter," Hemond says. "The right-field wall was proving to be a disadvantage for us. But in adding a left-handed hitter of Palmeiro's caliber and a left-handed starter in Fernandez to contain the opposition's left-handed power, I think we'll be able to turn it around."

If they are to be the ones to displace the Blue Jays at the top of the baseball world, however, the O's will need someone to close out games. After reliever Gregg Olson was plagued by serious elbow problems last year, they declined to offer him arbitration. The Orioles believe, however, that they have found a stopper in 36-year-old Lee Smith, but is he past his prime? The answer to that question seems to be a resounding yes. True, he saved 46 games last season, but his ERA was an alarming 3.88.

Hemond acknowledges that the bullpen could be a problem, but adds: "When I was in Chicago with the White Sox, we won in 1983 with Dennis Lamp

leading our club in saves with 15. And Pittsburgh went to the playoffs three times with a committee of closers. If we have to, we feel we have enough capable people to do that."

Over in the newly formed American League Central Division, Indians general manager John Hart is singing a similar tune. Hart, too, talks about his owner being committed to winning now that the Indians are moving into their new digs, the state-of-the-art Gateway Stadium with its 115 luxury boxes. The Indians have not had a legitimate pennant contender since 1959, have not appeared in a World Series since 1954. Last year, their final one at cavernous, decrepit Municipal Stadium, was most symbolic of their 40 years of futility and frustration in that it was over before it began. The spring-training boating accident that claimed the lives of bullpen closer Steve Olin and fellow reliever Tim Crews was followed by the early-season shoulder injury that finished staff ace Charles Nagy.

"We've had to put all that behind us," Hart says. "In between our tragedy, this team has come together, and with the nu-

cleus of Albert Belle, Carlos Baerga, Kenny Lofton and a healthy Sandy Alomar, we can realistically talk of this being a breakthrough year where we go beyond .500 and contend with the Blue Jays. With the addition of Omar Vizquel [from the Mariners] to play shortstop, we've solidified our defense, which was the worst in the American League last year. You could make a case for Alomar-Vizquel-Baerga-Lofton being the best up the middle in baseball."

The Indians' acquisition of Vizquel, arguably the best "pure" fielding shortstop in the league, was perhaps the most controversial deal of the off-season if only because it was viewed as a step backward for the Mariners in their efforts to become legitimate contenders. Prior to trading the Gold Glove-winning Vizquel for the Indians' very ordinary shortstop Felix Fermin and switch-hitting first baseman/DH Reggie Jefferson, the Mariners had executed a number of bold moves that had people touting them as favorites in the AL West.

The Mariners made no secret of the fact that Vizquel was dealt for monetary reasons—especially after they had elected to re-sign pitching ace Randy Johnson for \$20.25 million rather than trade him.

"Before you question the Vizquel deal, you've got to look at the whole thing," insists Mariners manager Lou Piniella. "For one thing, Fermin will hit for a higher average and drive in more runs, and going from grass to the artificial turf will help his defense."

"But looking beyond that, we're paying Fermin nearly \$1 million less than we would have had to pay Vizquel, plus we got \$400,000 in the deal. That enabled us to sign Greg Hibbard for our fourth starter once he agreed to take just \$1 million in salary the first year. So it came down to us trading Vizquel for three players who cost almost the same."

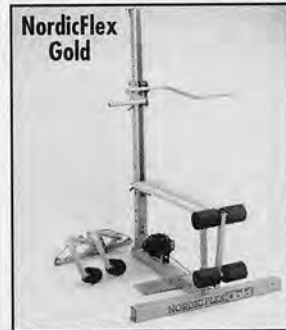
In the meantime, by adding Jefferson and Eric Anthony from Houston, the Mariners picked up 25 homers and shored up what Piniella contends was their primary deficiency.

"We hit only 30 homers left-handed last year [excluding Ken Griffey Jr.]," he points out. "We had the best record in the league [35-18] against lefties, but against righties we were 47-62. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what we had to do to be contenders."

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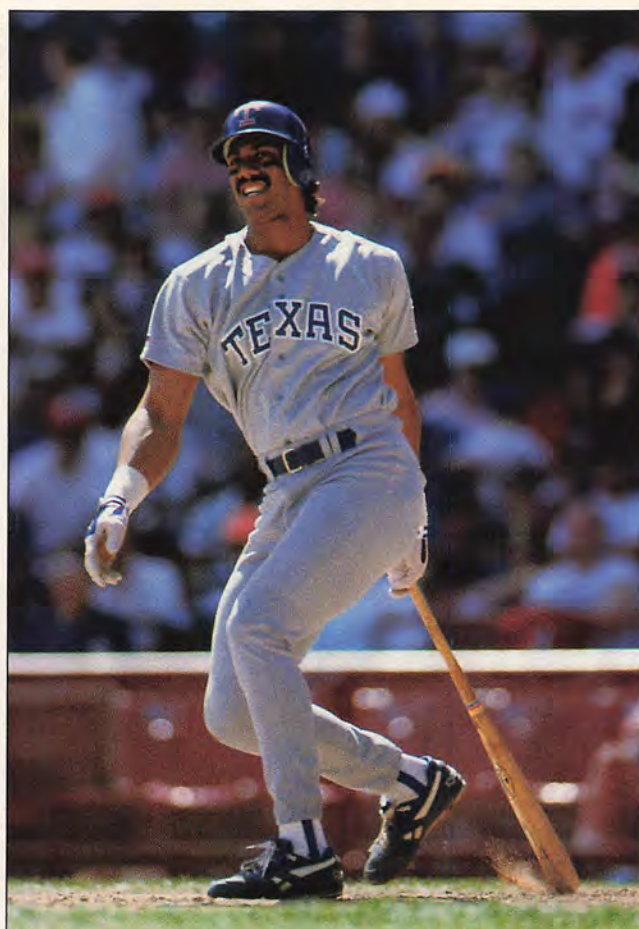
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TOM D'PACE



Still, they'll have to beat out the Rangers. And like the Indians, the Rangers are moving into a new ballpark and looking to christen it with, for them, a would-be first-ever trip into the postseason. If the three-division format had been in effect last year, the Rangers would have won the West by four games over Seattle. With that in mind, Rangers GM Tom Grieve felt he had only to do some fine-tuning over the off-season, replacing Nolan Ryan and Charlie Leibrandt at the back end of his rotation and adding some bullpen help. He did that with the signings of veteran lefties Bruce Hurst and Rick Honeycutt. Things got a little hairy, though, when contract negotiations with Palmeiro's agent, Jim Bronner, got ugly and Grieve opted instead to sign Will Clark.

Grieve sees that as a wash, even though Clark is coming off his worst season and Palmeiro his best. Grieve also is not mourning the defection of Julio Franco (.289 average, 14 homers, 84 RBI) to the White Sox.

"I just see that as a matter of us adding [Jose] Canseco [who missed most of last year with elbow surgery]," he says. "Jose is going to have to DH, and there was no other place to put Franco. Our strength is not so much our offense as it is having three durable and dependable starters in Kevin Brown, Roger Pavlik and Kenny Rogers. If

we can add one more starter or find one from within like a Ricky Helling [12-8, 3.60, 188 strikeouts and just 46 walks in 177 1/3 innings at Double-A last year], I think we can play with anyone."

The Rangers' biggest challenge might just come from the White Sox. "We came as close to beating the Blue Jays as anyone last year," says White Sox manager Gene Lamont. "We had Stewart on the ropes in Game 6 of the ALCS and couldn't put him away. We needed another big bat and we got one [in Franco]. Otherwise, it's pitching that ultimately wins for you and I'm very comfortable with our pitching."

It remains to be seen whether Darrin Jackson, attempting to come back from Graves disease, a thyroid condition that sapped his strength last year, can offset the loss of Ellis Burks' offense in right field. But Lamont is right about one thing: In Jack McDowell, Alex Fernandez, Jason Bere and Wilson Alvarez, the White Sox have what broadcaster Hawk Harrelson calls "the best 'stuff' staff in baseball." With Frank Thomas, Robin Ventura and Franco providing middle-of-the-order punch and Ron Karkovics, Ozzie Guillen and Lance Johnson providing the league's best up-the-middle defense, the Sox, with or without Michael Jordan, have the right "stuff" to take it to a higher level this year.

The Mariners have added some much-needed left-handed pop to the lineup alongside Ken Griffey Jr.; power has not been a problem for the Rangers, with sluggers such as Juan Gonzalez.

Ah yes, the Jordan distraction factor. Lamont merely shrugs and raises his eyes skyward at the prospect of Jordan trying out for the right-field job in a spring training circus that will make the Bo Jackson comeback saga of a year ago seem like a day at the beach. Even though Lamont says he's almost certain that Jordan's flirtation with baseball will be short-lived once he starts seeing curveballs, there is this crazy vision that just won't go away: In the ninth-inning of the seventh game of the American League Championship Series, Michael Jordan, basketball's gift to baseball, hits a game-winning homer to beat the Blue Jays, sending Pat Gillick off into the sunset that is the Canadian Football League.

"Crazy as it is," Lamont says, "I'll take it." ★

Bill Madden is a baseball columnist for the *New York Daily News*.

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At Columbus High in Columbus, Ga., nobody hit the ball harder than its first baseman, a big kid by the name of Frank Thomas. He hurt baseballs back then, in 1986, much as he does now. He hit them hard, sometimes high, almost always long. Thomas didn't strike out too often and displayed a discipline at the plate that belied his youth. He made contact with a slap-hitter's regularity.

Yet none of that made the phone ring back on those June days and nights while baseball's free-agent amateur draft droned on into the later rounds. But that didn't keep Thomas from sitting by the phone and waiting...and waiting...and waiting.

More than 800 names were called by the time the last scouting director decided to call it a day.

"I was not drafted and I was shocked," Thomas recalls, seven years later. "There were about 20 guys in my area drafted, and none of those guys compared to what I accomplished. They had speed and other things I didn't have, but no one even came close to doing what I've done. Those guys didn't make it through A-ball. That's something I've never understood. The scouts told me I would never be a major-league player, and I told them, 'A few years down the road, I'm going to cost you a little more than I would right now.' I hit .400 in high school, hit 11, 12 home runs in like a 22-game schedule. We won the state championship once and finished second the following year. The scouts were everywhere. I had great performances throughout all that, and they told me I was a football player on a baseball field."

And Thomas told them they were wrong. Turns out he was right. He cost the Chicago White Sox a six-figure signing bonus when they chose him out of Auburn with the seventh overall selection of the 1989 draft. But that was only the beginning. Last winter, Thomas signed a six-year, \$42 million contract extension after leading the White Sox to their first divisional crown in 10 years.

Seven years after staring at a phone that refused to talk back, he heard a ring loud and clear. Jack Lang of the Baseball Writers Association of America was on the other end, informing Thomas he had unanimously won the 1993 American League Most Valuable Player Award.

"I picked up the phone on the first ring," Thomas says,

flashing the smile that already is making him millions in endorsements. "Exactly 4 o'clock, and I picked it up right away."

In a league packed with great young hitters—Carlos Baeraga, Albert Belle, Juan Gonzalez, Ken Griffey Jr., John Olerud, to name a few—Thomas was chosen the best. This from an athlete who doesn't showcase the grace and swiftness normally associated with superstars. At 6-5, 257 pounds, Thomas doesn't even look like a baseball player.

"I don't do everything as nice as everyone else," he says. "I'm not the Human Highlight Film or anything, but I get the job done and I've gotten it done on a consistent basis."

Like Hank Aaron from a previous generation of superstars, consistency is a word that best captures Thomas' value. He has shown discipline at the plate, walking at least 100 times in each of the last three seasons. In 1993, he hit .317 with 41 home runs and 128 RBI, despite batting third in a lineup that offered him little protection. Thomas always has preferred batting third to cleanup, and considering his 15 first-inning home runs in '93, the only people who now want him to bat fourth are American League pitchers, who have no grace period against the White Sox thanks to a guaranteed first-inning confrontation with Thomas.

Now comes the hard part. With Michael Jordan out of the limelight, can Thomas become the king of Chicago sports?

Thomas, who signed an \$8 million endorsement deal with Reebok, is well-aware of the downside to fame. He knows it can taint a personality, but he doesn't want it to happen to him. He doesn't want to change.

"It's hard to do, but I feel I can do it," Thomas says. "I'm not the type to harp on things that have happened in the past. I'm only as good as my last game, my last plate appearance."

Still, the exposure that comes with stardom for today's athletes, especially those who endorse products, can turn the

FRANK THOMAS CAN CRUSH A
BASEBALL, BUT HIS NICKNAME
CUTS DEEPER: HE'S BOTHERED BY
HIS BASEBALL PAST/By Tom Keegan

THE BI

star almost into a surreal character. He sees himself staring from every poster and sees others staring at him as if he were a cartoon character come to life, strolling the sidewalks of Chicago with a real-life wife and son.

"That's something I'll have to get used to because I like going places in Chicago with my family," Thomas says of being gawked at. "I think of Frank Thomas as just being a baseball player, but to everyone else, it's something bigger, and I can tell it's going on."

Such attention can inflate an athlete's sense of self-importance to the point where he begins referring to himself in the third person. Thomas has fallen into that trap of referring to himself in the third person, but it's not as if he's forgotten his roots. Here, repeatedly goes out of his way

White Sox MVP slugger Frank Thomas has come a long way, earning a respect that was hard to come by: He went undrafted out of high school.

to thank his high school baseball coach, Bobby Howard, for instilling in him the foundation for baseball success.

However, Thomas is not exempt from being teased by teammates, some of whom called him "Stat King" during his MVP season

because he checked the statistics of the league's top young hitters on a daily basis.

"We're used to that by now," says teammate Tim Lincecum. "Every day he comes in and grabs the stat sheet and sees how different guys are doing. That motivates him to try and top them. Obviously it works, so hey, why change it?"

"He knows he's good and we know he's good. I think the media makes his head bigger than most. Some guys handle it different than others. What can you do? You can't change him."

White Sox hitting coach Walt Hrynin sees nothing wrong with the way Thomas tracks his success with numbers.

"Pete Rose was exactly the same way," Hrynin says. "That's the way he stayed motivated. Frank ain't trying to fool anybody. He ain't trying

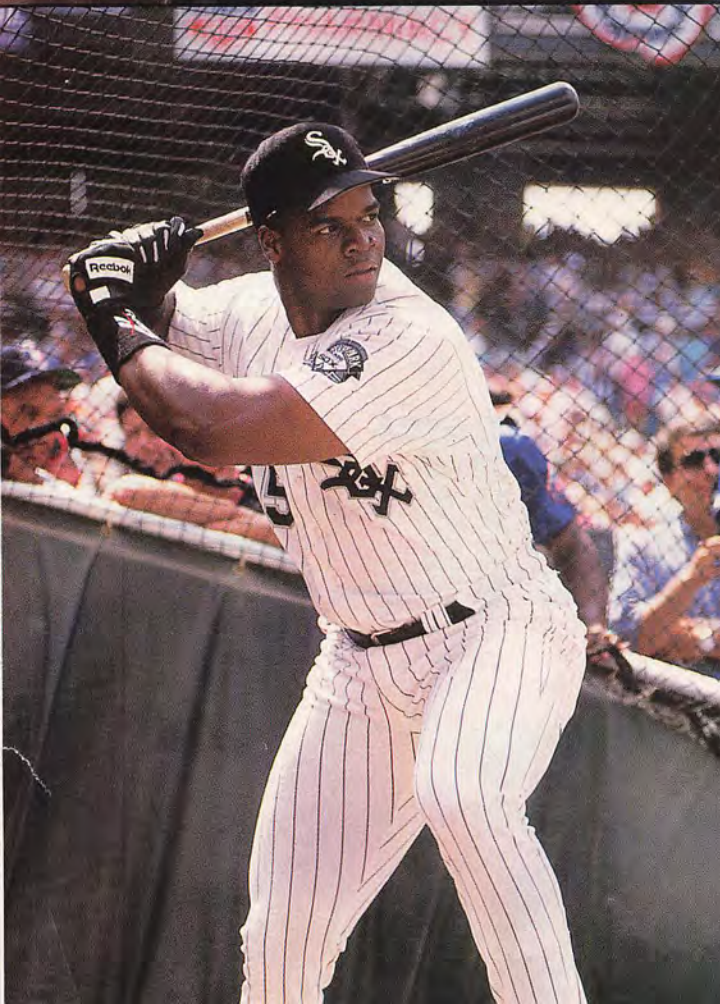
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to hide it. He's right out in the open with it, so I respect him for that. Pete Rose knew what he was hitting, and he always knew what everybody else was hitting. He always wanted to get more hits than anybody who ever lived. That drive, that determination, that's a motivating factor in improving."

It was that drive and determination that allowed Thomas to play with an arm injury during the pennant stretch last year.

"Everyone thought at first that I was more concerned about my daily stats and what I was doing than about the other team," he says. "But they saw that that's not true, especially when I went out there and played when I could barely pick up my arm."

Thanks to his hitting stroke and stats, any discussion of Thomas invariably invites the names of all-time greats. Thomas possesses a unique blend of power and discipline à la Babe Ruth and Ted Williams. He has Rose's drive and determination to amass statistics. And he brings to the plate the rare powers of concentration possessed by Eddie Murray and Wade Boggs.

"Frank's not afraid to be great," Hriniaak says. "By that I mean trying to be as good as you can be. Be the guy who wants to lead the league in RBI. Be the guy who wants to be up there with the game on the line. But also be the guy who gets a hit his last time up when he's 0-for-4 with the game over—when you're ahead 10-1 or behind 10-1. Try to show up for every pitch, every time a guy cocks his arm, total concentration, total determination, trying to be successful that particular pitch. I've seen Wade Boggs go to the plate and foul off five, six pitches in a row, and he was concentrating so hard, bearing down so hard, that after he made an out he would come back to the bench and would be exhausted, then he would regroup. Frank has that kind of mental discipline."

That discipline has most baseball insiders confident that Thomas will not have difficulty maintaining a Hall of Fame pace.

"You're not going to see a decline in my play," he says. "I'm still learning the game and I'm still learning hitting. I will continue to improve, but there is no pressure on me to perform any better than I've performed. My goal is to win a World Series, and we have the talent to do it."

The thought of Thomas improving upon last season tests the imagination.

"I think I can take a few more chances at the plate," he says. "It's great to be disciplined, but there are times—when men are out there on base—that I can put the ball into play more. I did do that more [in '93]. That's why I had the number of RBI I had. I hit a lot of balls out of the strike zone to drive in runs, and that was something new to Frank Thomas. In the past, I had such a small zone. I very seldom swing at a high pitch or a pitch outside. I'm still selective, but I pick my spots."

Thomas has picked his spots well enough to go from being an undrafted high school player to the unanimous MVP of a league stocked with young superstars.

"Not bad," he says, "for a guy who was told he never would play in the major leagues." ★

Tom Keegan is a sports columnist for the *Daily Southtown* in Chicago.

Thomas possesses a rare combination of power and discipline, and few have his drive and determination. Says teammate Tim Lincecum: "He knows he's good and we know he's good. I think the media makes his head bigger than most.... What can you do? You can't change him."



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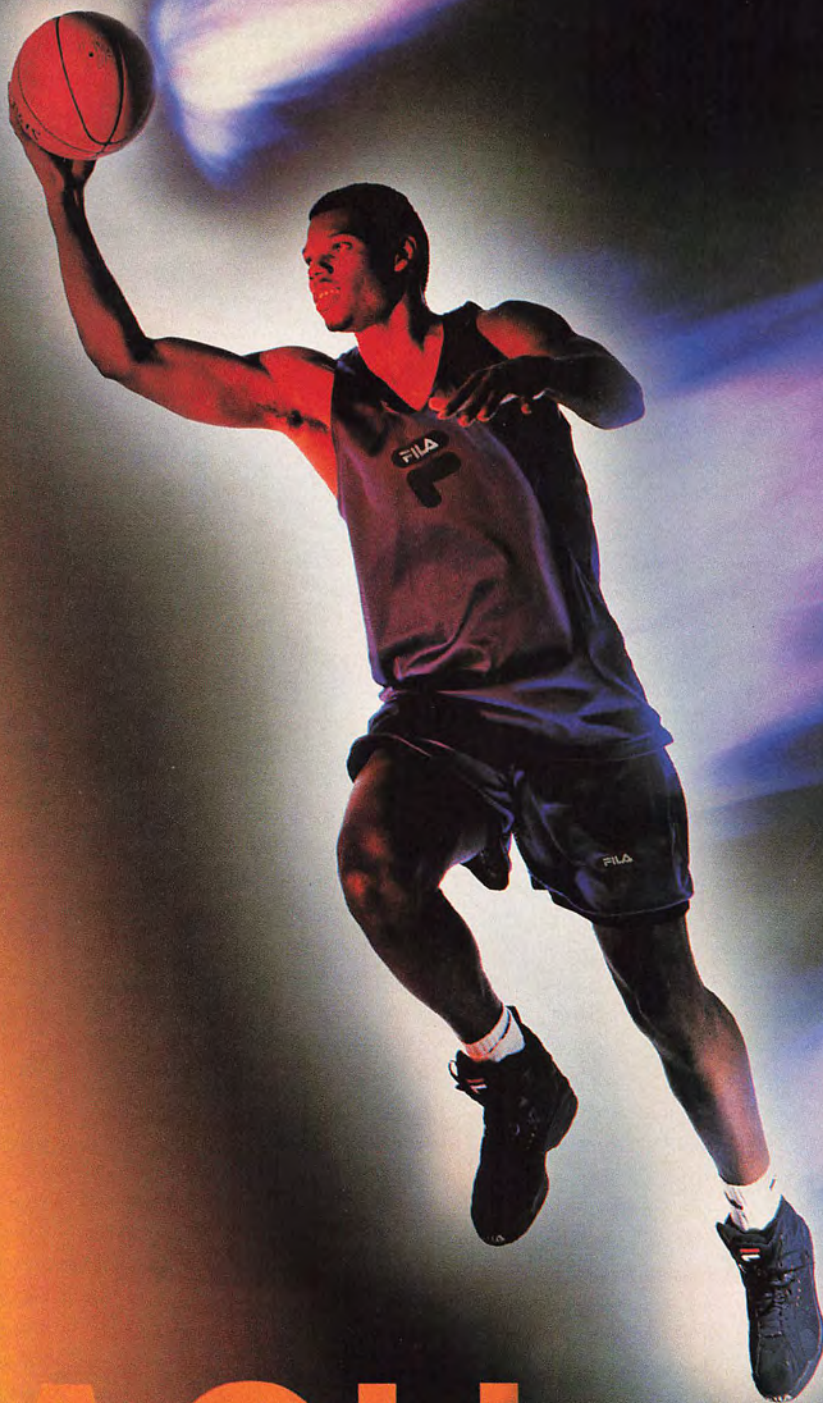
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VS. RIGHT-HANDED STARTERS

WON	LOST	PCT.
29	32	.655
32	32	.590
33	33	.577
36	36	.571
38	38	.548
39	39	.536
37	37	.526
40	40	.524
40	40	.524
38	38	.513
39	39	.500
42	42	.500
45	45	.423
49	49	.372

WON	LOST	PCT.
CHICAGO	66	.593
MINNESOTA	6	.578
KANSAS CITY	17	.567
TORONTO	26	.565
MILWAUKEE	22	.550
SEATTLE	28	.538
DETROIT	23	.535
TEXAS	25	.490
BOSTON	22	.478
OAKLAND	24	.471
CALIFORNIA	25	.471
NEW YORK	19	.471
BALTIMORE	17	.471
BALTIMORE	49	.471
CLEVELAND	43	.471

WON	LOST	PCT.
32	22	.593
26	19	.578
17	13	.567
26	20	.565
22	18	.550
28	24	.538
23	20	.535
25	26	.490
22	24	.478
24	27	.471
25	29	.471
19	17	.471
49	43	.471

ONE-RUN DECISIONS (324)

	WON	LOST
KANSASCITY	24	17
TORONTO	28	20
DETROIT	24	18
OAKLAND	22	18
MINNESOTA	22	18
SEATTLE	32	27
DETROIT	23	21
TEXAS	23	21
BOSTON	27	25
OAKLAND	20	21
CALIFORNIA	21	23
NEW YORK	21	30
BALTIMORE	19	30
CLEVELAND	18	35

VS. LEFT-HANDED STARTERS (117)

WON	LOST
12	4
9	4
15	9
14	10
11	8
9	7
8	7
9	10
8	10
4	5
6	12
5	10
5	12
2	9

DOUBLE PLAYS (15)

	WON	LOST
BAL	2	0
BOS	1	0
DET	2	1
CHIC	1	1
KANS	1	1
NEW	1	2
MILWA	0	0
OAKL	0	0
SEAT	0	0
CALIF	0	0
CLEV	0	1
TEXA	0	1
MINN	0	1
TORO	0	0

WON	LOST	PCT.
35	35	.501
36	36	.538
39	39	.536
38	38	.513
38	38	.513
41	41	.512
41	41	.474
42	42	.462
46	46	.452
43	43	.449
50	50	.405
53	53	.369
56	56	.333

WON	LOST	PCT.
16	16	.619
16	16	.619
19	19	.596
18	18	.581
19	19	.558
20	20	.545
21	21	.523
28	28	.491
27	27	.438
26	26	.435
24	24	.429
24	24	.429
29	29	.408
30	30	.318

WON	LOST	PCT.
9	9	.640
8	8	.600
9	9	.571
6	6	.571
10	10	.565
7	7	.533
9	9	.526
10	10	.524
12	12	.520
11	11	.500
14	14	.417
15	15	.400
12	12	.400
18	18	.308

SUPERSTAT SECTION

BASEBALL BY THE NUMBERS

SPORT MAGAZINE

WON	LOST	PCT.
32	32	.614
28	28	.597
30	30	.583
41	41	.548
42	42	.523
45	45	.501
47	47	.494
47	47	.470
48	48	.472
50	50	.441
51	51	.388
51	51	.310

VS. RIGHT-HANDED STARTERS

WON	LOST	PCT.
PITTSBURGH	27	.593
LOS ANGELES	37	.578
ATLANTA	30	.567
ST. LOUIS	27	.565
CHICAGO	22	.550
CINCINNATI	28	.538
CLEVELAND	23	.535
NEW YORK	25	.490
PHILADELPHIA	22	.478
ST. LOUIS	24	.471
ATLANTA	25	.471
PHILADELPHIA	19	.471
ST. LOUIS	49	.471
ATLANTA	43	.471

ONE-RUN DECISIONS (322)

	WON	LOST
SAN DIEGO	27	16
ST. LOUIS	37	22
PHILADELPHIA	30	27
PITTSBURGH	27	22
CHICAGO	33	29
LOS ANGELES	29	27
ATLANTA	22	26
CINCINNATI	21	25
MONTREAL	20	39
SAN FRANCISCO	22	32
NEW YORK	20	29
HOUSTON	19	26

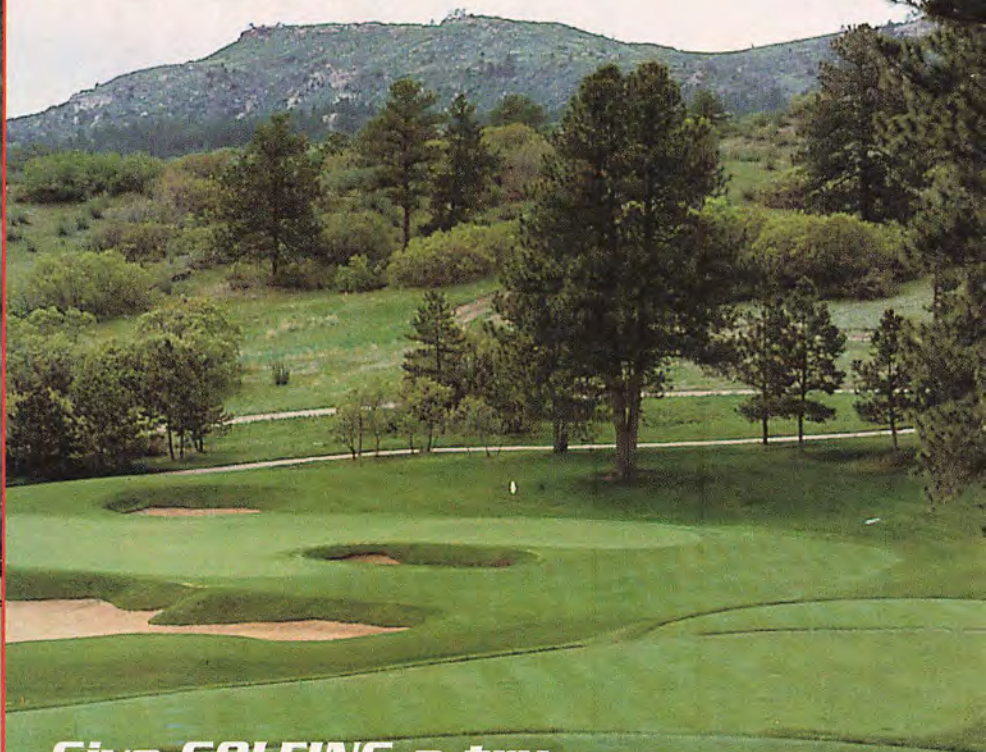
EXTRA-INNING GAMES (103)

	WON	LOST
ST. LOUIS	10	5
PHILADELPHIA	10	9
ATLANTA	8	9

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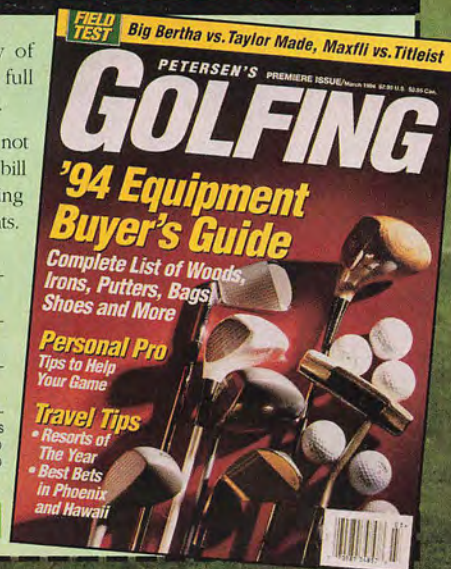
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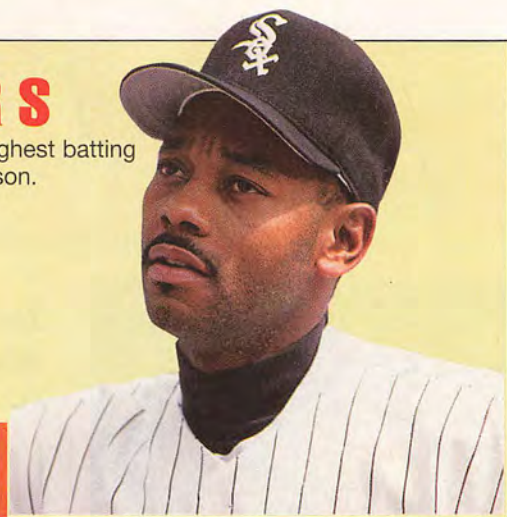
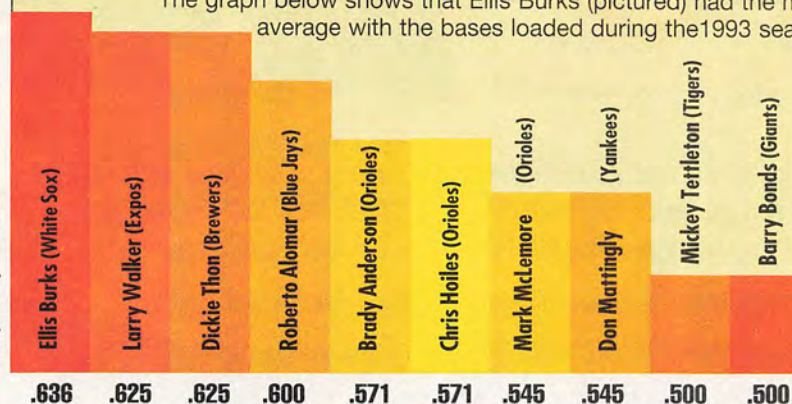
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MONEY PLAYERS

The graph below shows that Ellis Burks (pictured) had the highest batting average with the bases loaded during the 1993 season.



RON VESELY

FINAL 1993 MAJOR LEAGUE STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE						
EAST	WON	LOST	PCT	GB	HOME	AWAY
TORONTO	95	67	.586	—	48-33	47-34
NEW YORK	88	74	.543	7	50-31	38-43
BALTIMORE	85	77	.525	10	48-33	37-44
DETROIT	85	77	.525	10	44-37	41-40
BOSTON	80	82	.494	15	43-38	37-44
CLEVELAND	76	86	.469	19	46-35	30-51
MILWAUKEE	69	93	.426	26	38-43	31-50
WEST	WON	LOST	PCT	GB	HOME	AWAY
CHICAGO	94	68	.580	—	45-36	49-32
TEXAS	86	76	.531	8	50-31	36-45
KANSAS CITY	84	78	.519	10	43-38	41-40
SEATTLE	82	80	.506	12	46-35	36-45
CALIFORNIA	71	91	.438	23	44-37	27-54
MINNESOTA	71	91	.438	23	36-45	35-46
OAKLAND	68	94	.420	26	38-43	30-51
NATIONAL LEAGUE						
EAST	WON	LOST	PCT	GB	HOME	AWAY
PHILADELPHIA	97	65	.599	—	52-29	45-36
MONTREAL	94	68	.580	3	55-26	39-42
ST. LOUIS	87	75	.537	10	49-32	38-43
CHICAGO	84	78	.519	13	43-38	41-40
PITTSBURGH	75	87	.463	22	40-41	35-46
FLORIDA	64	98	.395	33	35-46	29-52
NEW YORK	59	103	.364	38	28-53	31-50
WEST	WON	LOST	PCT	GB	HOME	AWAY
ATLANTA	104	58	.642	—	51-30	53-28
SAN FRANCISCO	103	59	.636	1	50-31	53-28
HOUSTON	85	77	.525	19	44-37	41-40
LOS ANGELES	81	81	.500	23	41-40	40-41
CINCINNATI	73	89	.451	31	41-40	32-49
COLORADO	67	95	.414	37	39-42	28-53
SAN DIEGO	61	101	.377	43	34-47	27-54

RON VESELY

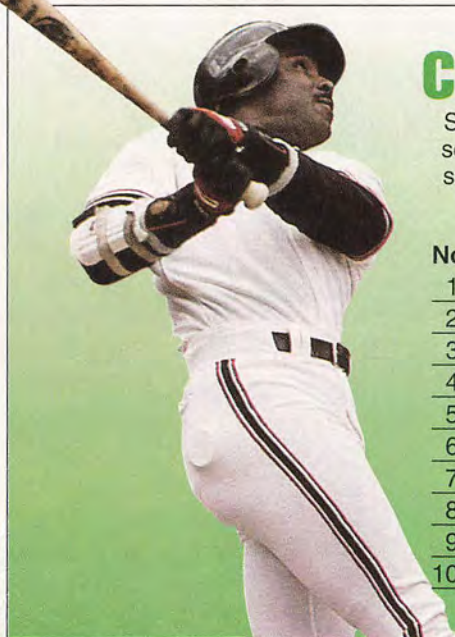


CONTAINING BONDS

So you thought no pitcher could stop Barry Bonds (pictured) during the regular season? Think again. The list below shows the pitchers who have had the most success in containing the three-time MVP slugger during his eight-year career.

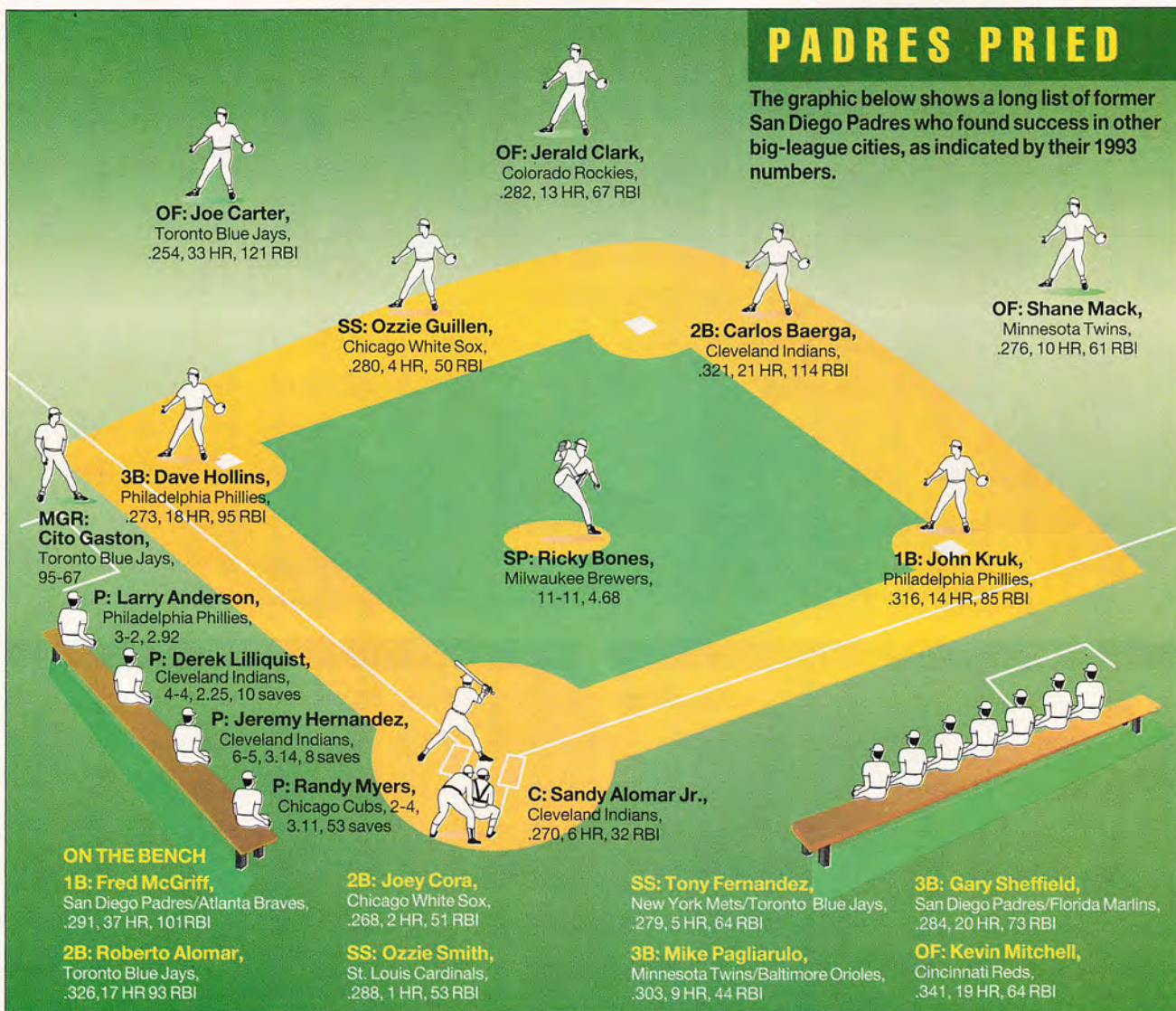
No.	Pitcher	Bonds' Average	AB	H	HR	RBI
1.	Jeff Brantley	.000	13	0	0	0
2.	Chuck McElroy	.056	18	1	0	1
3.	Mike Bielecki	.063	32	2	0	2
4.	Steve Cooke	.077	13	1	0	0
5.	Mitch Williams	.083	12	1	0	2
6.	Fernando Valenzuela	.091	11	1	0	0
7.	Ted Power	.111	18	2	1	3
8.	Bob Welch	.125	16	2	0	0
9.	Charlie Leibbrandt	.133	15	2	0	1
10.	Paul Assenmacher	.135	37	5	1	4

MICKEY PFLIEGER

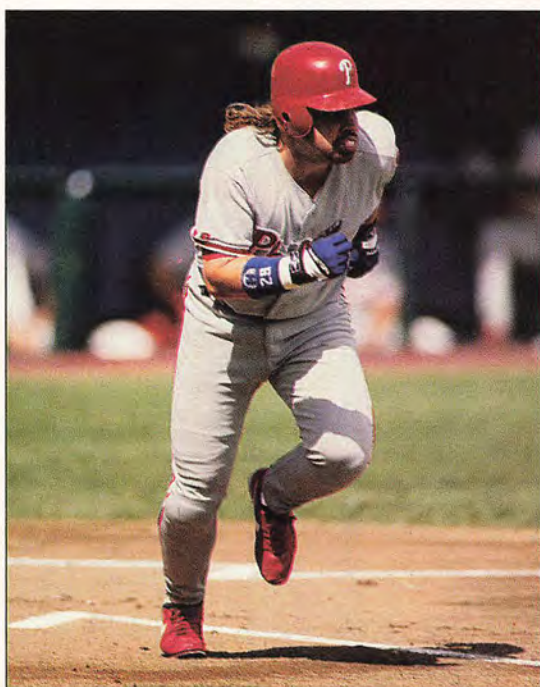


PADRES PRIED

The graphic below shows a long list of former San Diego Padres who found success in other big-league cities, as indicated by their 1993 numbers.



Compiled by William Ladson



DAVE BLACK

OFFICIAL 1993 ATTENDANCE

AMERICAN LEAGUE											
(HOME)				(ROAD)							
CLUB	DATES	GAMES	ATTENDANCE	CLUB	DATES	GAMES	ATTENDANCE				
BALTIMORE	80	81	*3,644,965	BALTIMORE	81	81	*2,190,759				
BOSTON	80	81	2,422,021	BOSTON	80	81	*2,542,249				
CALIFORNIA	81	81	2,057,460	CALIFORNIA	80	81	2,286,647				
CHICAGO	79	81	2,581,091	CHICAGO	81	81	*2,571,969				
CLEVELAND	80	81	2,177,908	CLEVELAND	80	81	2,216,318				
DETROIT	81	81	1,971,421	DETROIT	78	81	2,387,312				
KANSAS CITY	80	81	1,934,578	KANSAS CITY	81	81	*2,378,624				
MILWAUKEE	78	81	1,688,080	MILWAUKEE	81	81	*2,269,151				
MINNESOTA	81	81	2,048,673	MINNESOTA	78	81	2,300,021				
NEW YORK	80	81	2,416,965	NEW YORK	81	81	*2,603,338				
OAKLAND	79	81	2,035,025	OAKLAND	79	81	2,326,919				
SEATTLE	81	81	2,051,853	SEATTLE	81	81	*2,307,636				
TEXAS	79	81	2,244,616	TEXAS	78	81	*2,401,762				
TORONTO	81	81	*4,057,947	TORONTO	81	81	*2,549,898				
TOTALS	1,120	1,134	**33,332,603	TOTALS	1,120	1,134	**33,332,603				

*All-time club record

**All-time league record

NATIONAL LEAGUE											
(HOME)				(ROAD)							
CLUB	DATES	TOTAL	AVERAGE	CLUB	DATES	TOTAL	AVERAGE				
COLORADO	79	*4,483,350	56,751	80	*2,695,071	33,688					
ATLANTA	81	*3,884,725	47,960	81	*2,944,157	36,348					
LOS ANGELES	81	3,170,392	39,141	80	*2,663,828	33,298					
PHILADELPHIA	80	*3,137,674	39,221	81	*2,666,219	32,916					
FLORIDA	80	*3,064,847	38,311	81	*2,701,068	33,347					
ST. LOUIS	81	2,844,328	35,115	80	*2,612,017	32,650					
CHICAGO	80	*2,653,763	33,172	80	*2,592,790	32,410					
SAN FRANCISCO	81	*2,606,354	32,177	80	*2,772,975	34,662					
CINCINNATI	79	2,453,232	31,054	81	*2,532,257	31,262					
HOUSTON	81	2,084,546	25,735	79	*2,421,566	30,653					
NEW YORK	79	1,873,183	23,711	80	*2,660,426	33,255					
PITTSBURGH	79	1,650,593	20,894	79	*2,507,346	31,739					
MONTREAL	81	1,641,437	20,265	81	*2,620,064	32,346					
SAN DIEGO	80	1,375,432	17,193	79	*2,534,072	32,077					
TOTALS	1,122	**36,923,856	32,909	TOTALS	1,122	**36,923,856	32,909				

*All-time club record

**All-time league record

RALLY KILLERS

The chart below reveals that Joe Carter (pictured) left the most runners on base during the 1993 regular season.

Joe Carter (Blue Jays)	296
Cecil Fielder (Tigers)	283
Ruben Sierra (A's)	276
Travis Fryman (Tigers)	270
Sammy Sosa (Cubs)	262
Terry Pendleton (Braves)	260
Darren Daulton (Phillies)	260
Eric Karros (Dodgers)	257
Dave Hollins (Phillies)	256
Todd Zeile (Cardinals)	255

Compiled by Stats, Inc.

TOM DIPACE

AMERICAN LEAGUE BATTING LEADERS

Minimum of 502 plate appearances.

	AVG	AB	R	H	HR	RBI
JOHN OLERUD, TOR	.363	551	109	200	24	107
PAUL MOLITOR, TOR	.332	636	121	211	22	111
ROBERTO ALOMAR, TOR	.326	636	109	192	17	93
KENNY LOFTON, CLE	.325	569	116	185	1	42
CARLOS BAERGA, CLE	.321	624	105	200	21	114
FRANK THOMAS, CHI	.317	549	106	174	41	128
MIKE GREENWELL, BOS	.315	540	77	170	13	72
TONY PHILLIPS, DET	.313	566	113	177	7	57
PAUL O'NEILL, NY	.311	498	71	155	20	75
LANCE JOHNSON, CHI	.311	540	75	168	0	47
DARRYL HAMILTON, MIL	.310	520	74	161	9	48
JUAN GONZALEZ, TEX	.310	536	105	166	46	118
KEN GRIFFEY, SEA	.309	582	113	180	45	109
BRIAN HARPER, MIN	.304	530	52	161	12	73
WADE BOGGS, NY	.302	560	83	169	2	59
TRAVIS FRYMAN, DET	.300	607	98	182	22	97

HOME RUNS

GONZALEZ, TEX	46
GRIFFEY, SEA	45
THOMAS, CHI	41
BELLE, CLE	38
PALMEIRO, TEX	37
CARTER, TOR	33
PALMER, TEX	33
TETTLTON, DET	32
SALMON, CAL	31
TARTABULL, NY	31

STOLEN BASES

	SB	CS
LOFTON, CLE	70	14
ALOMAR, TOR	55	15
POLONIA, CAL	55	24
HENDERSON, OAK-TOR	53	8
CURTIS, CAL	48	24
JOHNSON, CHI	35	7
WHITE, TOR	34	4
JOSE, KC	31	13
HULSE, TEX	29	9
KNOBLAUCH, MIN	29	11

TRIPLES

JOHNSON, CHI	14
CORA, CHI	13
HULSE, TEX	10
FERNANDEZ, TOR	9
MCRAE, KC	9

RUNS

PALMEIRO, TEX	124
MOLITOR, TOR	121
LOFTON, CLE	116
WHITE, TOR	116
HENDERSON, OAK-TOR	114

TOTAL BASES

GRIFFEY, SEA	359
GONZALEZ, TEX	339
THOMAS, CHI	333
PALMEIRO, TEX	331
OLERUD, TOR	330

TIMES WALKED

PHILLIPS, DET	132
HENDERSON, OAK-TOR	120
OLERUD, TOR	114
THOMAS, CHI	112
TETTLTON, DET	109

RUNS BATTED IN

BELLE, CLE	129
THOMAS, CHI	128
CARTER, TOR	121
GONZALEZ, TEX	118
FIELDER, DET	117
BAERGA, CLE	114
DAVIS, CAL	112
MOLITOR, TOR	111
TETTLTON, DET	110
GRIFFEY, SEA	109

HITS

MOLITOR, TOR	211
BAERGA, CLE	200
OLERUD, TOR	200
ALOMAR, TOR	192
LOFTON, CLE	185
PUCKETT, MIN	184
FRYMAN, DET	182
GRIFFEY, SEA	180
MCRAE, KC	177
PHILLIPS, DET	177

DOUBLES

OLERUD, TOR	54
WHITE, TOR	42
PALMEIRO, TEX	40
VALENTIN, BOS	40
PUCKETT, MIN	39

ON-BASE PERCENTAGE

OLERUD, TOR	473
PHILLIPS, DET	443
HENDERSON, OAK-TOR	432
THOMAS, CHI	426
HOILES, BAL	416

SLUGGING PERCENTAGE

GONZALEZ, TEX	632
GRIFFEY, SEA	617
THOMAS, CHI	607
OLERUD, TOR	599
HOILES, BAL	585

TIMES STRUCK OUT

DEER, DET-BOS	169
TARTABULL, NY	156
PALMER, TEX	154
BUHNER, SEA	144
TETTLTON, DET	139

AMERICAN LEAGUE PITCHING LEADERS

Minimum of 162 innings pitched.

	ERA	W-L	IP	H	SO
KEVIN APPIER, KC	2.56	18-8	238.2	183	186
WILSON ALVAREZ, CHI	2.95	15-8	207.2	168	155
JIMMY KEY, NY	3.00	18-6	236.2	219	173
ALEX FERNANDEZ, CHI	3.13	18-9	247.1	221	169
FRANK VIOLA, BOS	3.14	11-8	183.2	180	91
CHUCK FINLEY, CAL	3.15	16-14	251.1	243	187
MARK LANGSTON, CAL	3.20	16-11	256.1	220	196
RANDY JOHNSON, SEA	3.24	19-8	255.1	185	308
DANNY DARWIN, BOS	3.26	15-11	229.1	196	130
DAVID CONE, KC	3.33	11-14	254.0	205	191
JACK MCDOWELL, CHI	3.37	22-10	256.2	261	158
BEN MCDONALD, BAL	3.39	13-14	220.1	185	171
ROGER PAVLIK, TEX	3.41	12-6	166.1	151	131
CHRIS BOSIO, SEA	3.45	9-9	164.1	138	119
ERIK HANSON, SEA	3.47	11-12	215.0	215	163
KEVIN BROWN, TEX	3.59	15-12	233.0	228	142

WINS

MCDOWELL, CHI	22-10
JOHNSON, SEA	19-8
HENTGEN, TOR	19-9
KEY, NY	18-6
APPIER, KC	18-8
FERNANDEZ, CHI	18-9
ROGERS, TEX	16-10
LANGSTON, CAL	16-11
FINLEY, CAL	16-14
ELDRD, MIL	16-16
ALVAREZ, CHI	15-8
DARWIN, BOS	15-11
BROWN, TEX	15-12

APPEARANCES

HARRIS, BOS	80
RADINSKY, CHI	73
FOSSAS, BOS	71
NELSON, SEA	71
WARD, TOR	71

GAMES STARTED

MOORE, DET	36
ELDRD, MIL	36
FINLEY, CAL	35
LANGSTON, CAL	35
TAPANI, MIN	35

COMPLETE GAMES

FINLEY, CAL	13
BROWN, TEX	12
JOHNSON, SEA	10
MCDOWELL, CHI	10
ELDRD, MIL	8

STRIKEOUTS

JOHNSON, SEA	308
LANGSTON, CAL	196
GUZMAN, TOR	194
CONE, KC	191
FINLEY, CAL	187
APPIER, KC	186
ELDRD, MIL	180
KEY, NY	173

LOSSES

ERICKSON, MIN	8-19
ELDRD, MIL	16-16
TAPANI, MIN	12-15
SEVEN TIED WITH 14	

SAVES

	SV	BS
WARD, TOR	45	6
MONTGOMERY, KC	45	6
HENKE, TEX	40	7
HERNANDEZ, CHI	38	6
ECKERSELY, OAK	36	9
AGUILERA, MIN	34	6
RUSSELL, BOS	33	4
OLSON, BAL	29	6
FARR, NY	25	6
HENNEMAN, DET	24	5

INNINGS

ELDRD, MIL	258.0
MCDOWELL, CHI	256.2
LANGSTON, CAL	256.1
JOHNSON, SEA	255.1
CONE, KC	254.0

GAMES FINISHED

WARD, TOR	70
HERNANDEZ, CHI	67
MONTGOMERY, KC	63
AGUILERA, MIN	61
HENKE, TEX	60

SHUTOUTS

MCDOWELL, CHI	4
BROWN, TEX	3
MOORE, DET	3
JOHNSON, SEA	3
FIVE TIED WITH 2	

WALKS

ALVAREZ, CHI	122
CONE, KC	114
GUZMAN, TOR	110
JOHNSON, SEA	99
WITT, OAK	91
ELDRD, MIL	91

HOME RUNS GIVEN UP

MOORE, DET	35
ELDRD, MIL	32
DARWIN, BOS	31
GULLICKSON, DET	28
BONES, MIL	28
FERNANDEZ, CHI	27
HENTGEN, TOR	27

NATIONAL LEAGUE BATTING LEADERS

Minimum of 502 plate appearances.

	AVG	AB	R	H	HR	RBI
ANDRES GALARRAGA, COL	.370	470	71	174	22	98
TONY GWYNN, SD	.358	489	70	175	7	59
GREGG JEFFERIES, ST.L	.342	544	89	186	16	83
BARRY BONDS, SF	.336	539	129	181	46	123
MARK GRACE, CHI	.325	594	86	193	14	98
JEFF BAGWELL, HOU	.320	535	76	171	20	88
MIKE PIAZZA, LA	.318	547	81	174	35	112
JOHN KRUK, PHI	.316	535	100	169	14	85
ORLANDO MERCED, PIT	.313	447	68	140	8	70
ROBBY THOMPSON, SF	.312	494	85	154	19	65
DANTE BICHETTE, COL	.310	538	93	167	21	89
JAY BELL, PIT	.310	604	102	187	9	51
RYNE SANDBERG, CHI	.309	456	67	141	9	45
CHARLIE HAYES, COL	.305	573	89	175	25	98
BERNARD GILKEY, ST.L	.305	557	99	170	16	70
JEFF BLAUSER, ATL	.305	597	110	182	15	73
LENNY DYKSTRA, PHI	.305	637	143	194	19	66

HOME RUNS

BONDS, SF	46
JUSTICE, ATL	40
WILLIAMS, SF	38
MCGRIFF, SD-ATL	37
GANT, ATL	36
PIAZZA, LA	35
BONILLA, NY	34
PLANTIER, SD	34
SOSA, CHI	33
WILKINS, CHI	30

STOLEN BASES

SB	CS
CARR, FLA	58
GRISSOM, MON	53
NIXON, ATL	47
JEFFERIES, ST.L	46
LEWIS, SF	46
DESHIELDS, MON	43
YOUNG, COL	42
BUTLER, LA	39
COLEMAN, NY	38
DYKSTRA, PHI	37

TRIPLES

FINLEY, HOU	13
BUTLER, LA	10
BELL, PIT	9
MORANDINI, PHI	9
THREE TIED WITH 8	

RUNS

DYKSTRA, PHI	143
BONDS, SF	129
GANT, ATL	113
MCGRIFF, SD-ATL	111
BLAUSER, ATL	110

TOTAL BASES

BONDS, SF	365
WILLIAMS, SF	325
GANT, ATL	309
DYKSTRA, PHI	307
PIAZZA, LA	307

TIMES WALKED

DYKSTRA, PHI	129
BONDS, SF	126
DAULTON, PHI	117
KRUK, PHI	111
BUTLER, LA	86

RUNS BATTED IN

BONDS, SF	123
JUSTICE, ATL	120
GANT, ATL	117
PIAZZA, LA	112
WILLIAMS, SF	110
DAULTON, PHI	105
ZEILE, ST.L	103
MCGRIFF, SD-ATL	101
MURRAY, NY	100
PLANTIER, SD	100

HITS

DYKSTRA, PHI	194
GRACE, CHI	193
GRISSOM, MON	188
BELL, PIT	187
JEFFERIES, ST.L	186
BLAUSER, ATL	182
BONDS, SF	181
BUTLER, LA	181
KING, PIT	180
THREE TIED AT 175	

DOUBLES

HAYES, COL	45
DYKSTRA, PHI	44
BICHETTE, COL	43
BIGGIO, HOU	41
GWYNN, SD	41

ON-BASE PERCENTAGE

BONDS, SF	458
KRUK, PHI	430
DYKSTRA, PHI	420
MERCED, PIT	414
JEFFERIES, ST.L	408

SLUGGING PERCENTAGE

BONDS, SF	677
GALARRAGA, COL	602
WILLIAMS, SF	561
PIAZZA, LA	561
MCGRIFF, SD-ATL	549

TIMES STRUCK OUT

SNYDER, LA	147
CONINE, FLA	135
SOSA, CHI	135
DESTRAD, FLA	130
PLANTIER, SD	124

NATIONAL LEAGUE PITCHING LEADERS

Minimum of 162 innings pitched.

	ERA	W-L	IP	H	SO
GREG MADDUX, ATL	2.36	20-10	267.0	228	197
JOSE RUIZ, CIN	2.48	14-9	257.1	218	227
MARK PORTUGAL, HOU	2.77	18-4	208.0	194	131
BILL SWIFT, SF	2.82	21-8	232.2	195	157
STEVE AVERY, ATL	2.94	18-6	223.1	216	125
PETE HARNISCH, HOU	2.98	16-9	217.2	171	185
TOM CANDIOTTI, LA	3.12	8-10	213.2	192	155
TOM GLAVINE, ATL	3.20	22-6	239.1	235	120
KEN HILL, MON	3.23	9-7	183.2	163	90
TERRY MULHOLLAND, PHI	3.25	12-9	191.0	177	116
TOMMY GREENE, PHI	3.42	16-4	200.0	175	167
RAMON MARTINEZ, LA	3.44	10-12	211.2	202	127
DWIGHT GOODEN, NY	3.45	12-15	208.2	188	149
DARRYL KILE, HOU	3.51	15-8	171.2	152	141
PEDRO ASTACIO, LA	3.57	14-9	186.1	165	122
OREL HERSHISER, LA	3.59	12-14	215.2	201	141
JOHN SMOLTZ, ATL	3.62	15-11	243.2	208	208

WINS

GLAVINE, ATL	22-6
BURKETT, SF	22-7
SWIFT, SF	21-8
MADDUX, ATL	20-10
PORTUGAL, HOU	18-4
AVERY, ATL	18-6
TEWKSBURY, ST.L	17-10
GREENE, PHI	16-4
SCHILLING, PHI	16-7
HARNISCH, HOU	16-9
FIVE TIED WITH 15	

APPEARANCES

JACKSON, SF	81
BECK, SF	76
WEST, PHI	76
MCMICHAEL, ATL	74
MURPHY, ST.L	73
MYERS, CHI	73

GAMES STARTED

GLAVINE, ATL	36
MADDUX, ATL	36
RUIZ, CIN	36
THREE TIED WITH 35	

COMPLETE GAMES

MADDUX, ATL	8
DRABEK, HOU	7
GOODEN, NY	7
GREENE, PHI	7
MULHOLLAND, PHI	7
SCHILLING, PHI	7

STRIKEOUTS

RUIZ, CIN	227
SMOLTZ, ATL	208
MADDUX, ATL	197
SCHILLING, PHI	186
HARNISCH, HOU	185
BENES, SD	179
GREENE, PHI	167

LOSSES

DRABEK, HOU	9-18
ARMSTRONG, FLA	9-17
HARRIS, COL	11-17
YOUNG, NY	1-16
HOUGH, FLA	9-16
FIVE TIED WITH 15	

SAVES

SV	BS
MYERS, CHI	53
BECK, SF	48
HARVEY, FLA	45
SMITH, ST.L	43
MIT. WILLIAMS, PHI	43
WETTEND, MON	43
STANTON, ATL	27
D. JONES, HOU	26
GOTT, LA	25
HOLMES, COL	25
HARRIS, SD	23

INNINGS

MADDUX, ATL	267.0
RUIZ, CIN	257.1
SMOLTZ, ATL	243.2
GLAVINE, ATL	239.1
DRABEK, HOU	237.2
SCHILLING, PHI	235.1

GAMES FINISHED

BECK, SF	71
MYERS, CHI	69
D. JONES, HOU	60
WETTEND, MON	58
MIT. WILLIAMS, PHI	57
HARVEY, FLA	54

SHUTOUTS

HARNISCH, HOU	4
R. MARTINEZ, LA	3
11 TIED WITH 2	

WALKS

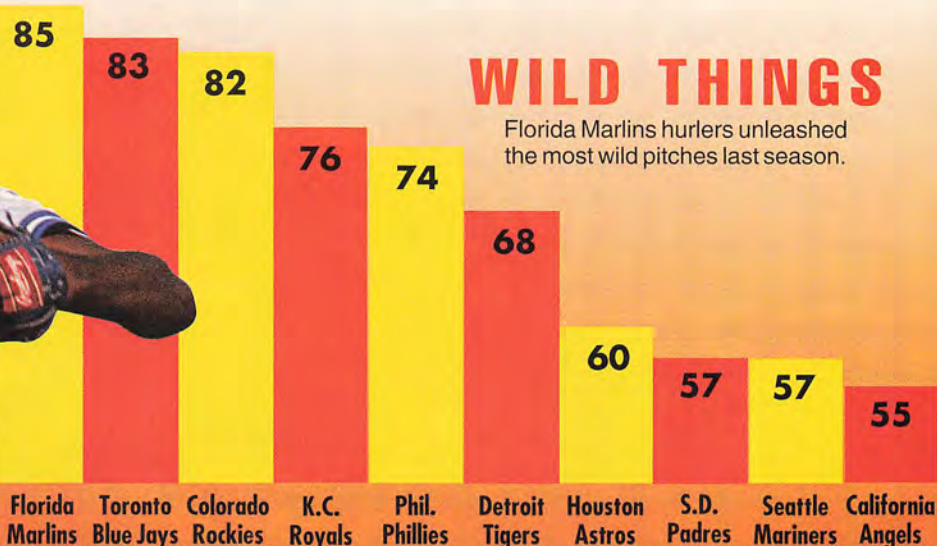
R. MARTINEZ, LA	104
SMOLTZ, ATL	100
GLAVINE, ATL	90
BOWEN, FLA	87
BENES, SD	86
RIVERA, PHI	85

HOME RUNS GIVEN UP

HARRIS, COL	33
ARMSTRONG, FLA	29
MARTINEZ, MON	27
TANANA, NY	26
GUZMAN, CHI	25
BOTTENFIELD, COL	24
SWINDELL, HOU	24

WILD THINGS

Florida Marlins hurlers unleashed the most wild pitches last season.



Compiled by William Ladson

AMERICAN LEAGUE CLUB BATTING

CLUB	AVG	G	AB	R	OR	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	GS	RBI	SH	SF	HP	BB	IBB	SO	SB	CS	GI DP	LOB	SHO	SLG	OBP
NEW YORK	.279	162	5615	821	761	1568	2444	294	24	178	5	793	22	50	43	629	47	910	39	35	149	1247	4	.435	.353
TORONTO	.279	162	5579	847	742	1556	2434	317	42	159	2	796	46	54	52	588	57	861	170	49	138	1187	1	.436	.350
CLEVELAND	.275	162	5619	790	813	1547	2296	264	31	141	3	747	39	72	49	488	57	843	159	55	131	1128	10	.409	.335
DETROIT	.275	162	5620	899	837	1546	2438	282	38	178	8	853	33	52	35	765	50	1122	104	63	101	1312	2	.434	.362
TEXAS	.267	162	5510	835	751	1472	2377	284	39	181	4	780	69	56	48	483	56	984	113	67	111	1034	6	.431	.329
BALTIMORE	.267	162	5508	786	745	1470	2276	287	24	157	3	744	49	56	41	655	52	930	73	54	131	1202	11	.413	.346
CHICAGO	.265	162	5483	776	664	1454	2256	228	44	162	7	731	72	61	33	604	52	834	106	57	126	1150	14	.411	.338
MINNESOTA	.264	162	5601	693	830	1480	2158	261	27	121	4	642	27	37	51	493	35	850	83	59	150	1145	13	.385	.327
BOSTON	.264	162	5496	686	698	1451	2170	319	29	114	2	644	80	49	62	508	69	871	73	38	146	1154	8	.395	.330
KANSAS CITY	.263	162	5522	675	694	1455	2194	294	35	125	3	641	48	51	52	428	50	936	100	75	107	1090	7	.397	.320
SEATTLE	.260	162	5494	734	731	1429	2232	272	24	161	8	681	63	51	56	624	73	901	91	68	132	1200	9	.406	.339
CALIFORNIA	.260	162	5391	684	770	1399	2048	259	24	114	2	644	50	46	38	564	39	930	169	100	129	1089	8	.380	.331
MILWAUKEE	.258	162	5525	733	792	1426	2091	240	25	125	2	688	57	45	40	555	52	932	138	93	117	1112	4	.378	.328
OAKLAND	.254	162	5543	715	846	1408	2184	260	21	158	4	679	46	49	33	622	45	1048	131	59	125	1188	13	.394	.330
TOTALS	.267	1134	77506	10674	10674	20661	31598	3861	427	2074	57	10063	701	729	633	8006	734	12952	1549	872	1793	16238	110	.408	.337

NATIONAL LEAGUE CLUB BATTING

CLUB	AVG	G	AB	R	OR	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	GS	RBI	SH	SF	HP	BB	IBB	SO	SB	CS	GI DP	LOB	SHO	SLG	OBP
SAN FRANCISCO	.276	162	5557	808	636	1534	2373	269	33	168	1	759	102	50	46	516	88	930	120	65	121	1155	5	.427	.340
PHILADELPHIA	.274	162	5685	877	740	1555	2422	297	51	156	8	811	84	51	42	665	70	1049	91	32	107	1281	2	.426	.351
COLORADO	.273	162	5517	758	967	1507	2329	278	59	142	3	704	70	52	46	388	40	944	146	90	125	978	13	.422	.323
ST. LOUIS	.272	162	5551	758	744	1508	2192	262	34	118	5	724	59	54	27	588	50	882	153	72	128	1177	8	.395	.341
CHICAGO	.270	163	5627	738	739	1521	2327	259	32	161	2	706	67	42	34	446	61	923	100	43	131	1133	10	.414	.325
PITTSBURGH	.267	162	5549	707	806	1482	2179	267	50	110	0	664	76	52	55	536	50	972	122	92	129	1199	6	.393	.335
HOUSTON	.267	162	5464	716	630	1459	2235	288	37	138	0	656	82	47	40	497	58	911	103	60	125	1116	8	.409	.330
CINCINNATI	.264	162	5517	722	785	1457	2185	261	28	137	5	669	63	66	32	485	42	1025	142	59	104	1125	10	.396	.324
ATLANTA	.262	162	5515	767	559	1444	2248	239	29	169	4	712	73	50	36	560	46	946	125	48	127	1165	9	.408	.331
LOS ANGELES	.261	162	5588	675	662	1458	2138	234	28	130	2	639	107	47	27	492	48	937	126	61	105	1162	8	.383	.321
MONTREAL	.257	163	5493	732	682	1410	2118	270	36	122	1	682	100	50	48	542	65	860	228	56	95	1166	5	.386	.326
SAN DIEGO	.252	162	5503	679	772	1386	2140	239	28	153	2	633	80	50	59	443	43	1046	92	41	111	1090	8	.389	.312
NEW YORK	.248	162	5448	672	744	1350	2126	228	37	158	4	632	89	47	24	448	43	879	79	50	108	1011	4	.390	.305
FLORIDA	.248	162	5475	581	724	1356	1897	197	31	94	4	542	58	43	51	498	39	1054	117	56	122	1183	14	.346	.314
TOTALS	.264	1135	77489	10190	10190	20427	30909	3588	513	1956	41	9533	110	701	567	7104	743	13358	1714	788	1638	15941	110	.399	.327

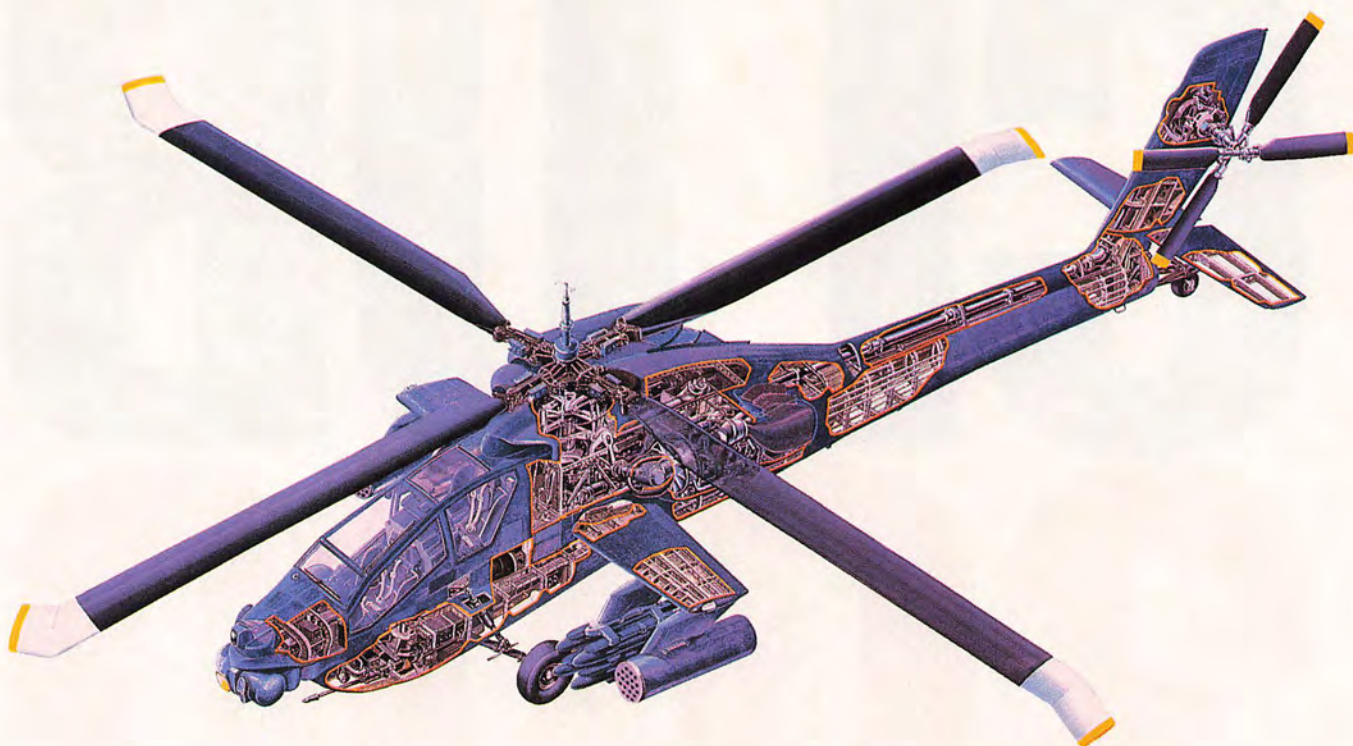
AMERICAN LEAGUE CLUB PITCHING

CLUB	W	L	ERA	G	CG	SHO	REL	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	IBB	SO	WP	B K	OPP AVG
CHICAGO	94	68	3.70	162	16	11	322	48	1454.0	1398	664	598	125	40	566	36	974	51	7	.255
BOSTON	80	82	3.77	162	9	11	389	44	1452.1	1379	698	609	127	48	552	87	997	42	11	.252
KANSAS CITY	84	78	4.04	162	16	6	303	48	1445.1	1379	694	649	105	44	571	36	985	76	7	.254
SEATTLE	82	80	4.20	162	22	10	353	41	1453.2	1421	731	678	135	66	605	56	1083	57	6	.259
TORONTO	95	67	4.21	162	11	11	344	50	1441.1	1441	742	674	134	32	620	38	1023	83	8	.261
TEXAS	86	76	4.28	162	20	6	359	45	1438.1	1476	751	684	144	44	562	42	957	52	14	.267
BALTIMORE	85	77	4.31	162	21	10	329	42	1442.2	1427	745	691	153	38	579	50	900	41	2	.261
CALIFORNIA	71	91	4.34	162	26	6	320	41	1430.1	1482	770	690	153	51	550	35	843	55	7	.270
NEW YORK	88	74	4.35	162	11	13	332	38	1438.1	1467	761	695	170	29	552	58	899	33	5	.266
MILWAUKEE	69	93	4.45	162	26	6	353	29	1447.0	1511	792	716	153	60	522	58	810	45	7	.271
CLEVELAND	76	86	4.58	162	7	8	410	45	1445.2	1591	813	735	182	39	591	53	888	41	5	.281
DETROIT	85	77	4.65	162	11	7	375	36	1436.2	1547	837	742	188	48	542	92	828	68	5	.276
MINNESOTA	71	91	4.71	162	5	3	356	44	1444.1	1591	830	756	148	45	514	34	901	43	13	.283
OAKLAND	68	94	4.90	162	8	2	424	42	1452.1	1551	846	791	157	49	680	58	864	39	6	.276
TOTALS	1134	1134	4.32	1134	209	110	4969	593	20222.1	20661	10674	9708	2074	633	8006	734	12952	726	103	.267

NATIONAL LEAGUE CLUB PITCHING

CLUB	W	L	ERA	G	CG	SHO	REL	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	IBB	SO	WP	B K	OPP AVG
ATLANTA	104	58	3.14	162	18	16	353	46	1455.0	1297	559	507	101	22	480	59	1036	46	9	.240
HOUSTON	85	77	3.49	162	18	14	324	42	1441.1	1363	630	559	117	41	476	52	1056	60	12	.251
LOS ANGELES	81	81	3.50	162	17	9	346	36	1472.2	1406	662	573	103	37	567	68	1043	47	20	.254
MONTREAL	94	68	3.55	163	8	7	385	61	1456.2	1369	682	574	119	47	521	38	934	46	12	.249
SAN FRANCISCO	103	59	3.61	162	4	9	414	50	1456.2	1385	636	585	168	50	442	46	982	33	18	.253
PHILADELPHIA	97	65	3.95	162	24	11	350	46	1472.2	1419	740	647	129	37	573	33	1117	74	7	.252
NEW YORK	59	103	4.05	162	16	8	297	22	1438.0	1483	744	647	139	50	434	61	867	32	14	.269
ST. LOUIS	87	75	4.09	162	5	7	423	54	1453.0	1553	744	660	152	43	383	50	775	40	7	.276
FLORIDA	64	98	4.13	162	4	5	409	48	1440.1	1437	724	661	135	32	598	58	945	85	20	.261
CHICAGO	84	78	4.18	163	8	5	422	56	1449.2	1514	739	673	153	43	470	61	905	43	21	.273
SAN DIEGO	61	101	4.23	162	8	6	397	32	1437.2	1470	772	675	148	34	558	72	957	57	14	.266
CINCINNATI	73	89	4.51	162	11	8	375	37	1434.0	1510	785	718	158	44	508	36	996	47	8	.272
PITTSBURGH	75	87	4.77	162	12	5	384	34	1445.2	1557	806	766	153	46	485	43	832	55	11	.280
COLORADO	67	95	5.41	162	9	0	453	35	1431.1	1664	967	860	181	41	609	66	913	82	22	.294
TOTALS	1134	1134	4.04	1135	162	110	5332	599	20284.2	20427	10190	9105	1956	567	7104	743	13358	747	195	.264

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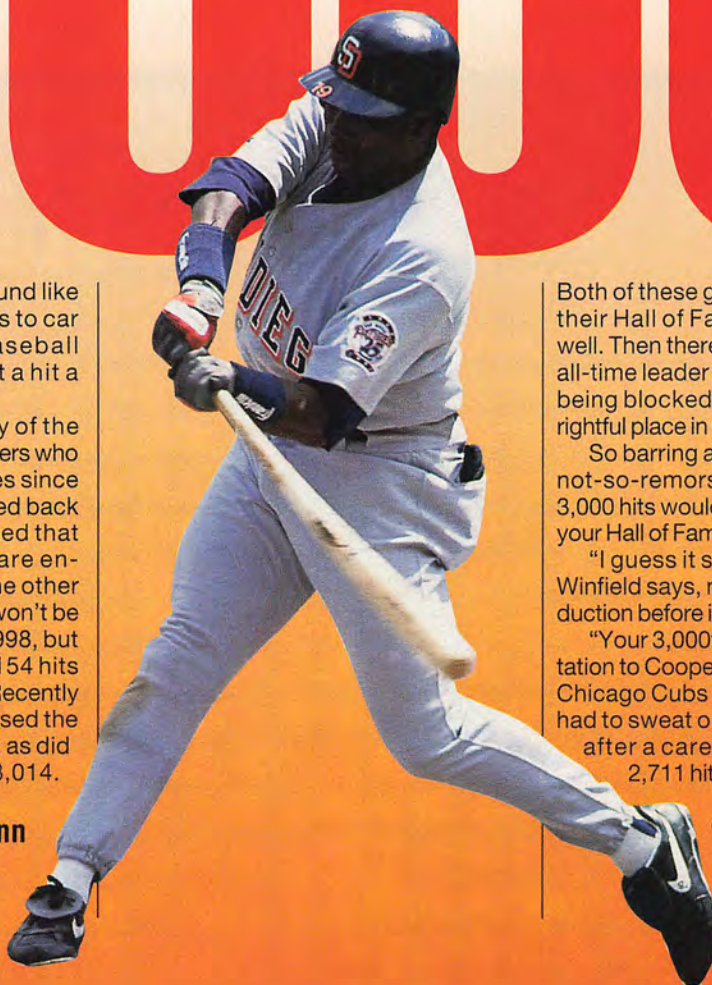
LIKE 300 WINS FOR A PITCHER, THE MAGIC NUMBER OF 3,000 HITS IS A BATTER'S TICKET TO THE HALL OF FAME/By Dave Nightingale

CLUB 3000

Three thousand. Doesn't sound like much. Sure isn't when it comes to car mileage. Three thousand baseball smacks should be easy...just a hit a game for 18½ seasons.

Nineteen. That's how many of the thousands and thousands of players who have played in the major leagues since the Grand Old Game commenced back in the 19th century have notched that 3,000th hit. Fifteen of those are enshrined in the Hall of Fame. The other four? Just-retired George Brett won't be eligible for Cooperstown until 1998, but consider him a shoe-in with 3,154 hits and more than 300 home runs. Recently retired Robin Yount also surpassed the 3,000 milestone with 3,142 hits, as did still-active Dave Winfield with 3,014.

Sweet-swinging Tony Gwynn is hopeful of becoming a club member.



Both of these guys would seem to have their Hall of Fame tickets punched as well. Then there's Pete Rose, baseball's all-time leader in hits with 4,256, who is being blocked by blockheads from his rightful place in Cooperstown.

So barring a gambling scandal and a not-so-remorseful attitude afterward, 3,000 hits would seem to buy and pay for your Hall of Fame bronze bust.

"I guess it stamps the application," Winfield says, not willing to count his induction before it's hatched.

"Your 3,000th hit is an automatic invitation to Cooperstown," counters former Chicago Cubs great Billy Williams, who had to sweat out his own Hall induction after a career that included "only" 2,711 hits.

San Diego's Tony Gwynn is one of the active players chasing that elusive 3,000 mark. "The 3,000 Hit Club is

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Michael Irvin - \$45	Jose Canseco - \$35	Shaquille O'Neal - \$125
Jim Kelly - \$40	Will Clark - \$35	David Robinson - \$40
Howie Long - \$35	Tom Glavine - \$40	
Ronnie Lott - \$35	Ken Griffey Jr. - \$45	Steffi Graf - \$40
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Art Monk - \$40	Dave Justice - \$45	Brett Hull - \$45
Joe Montana - \$60	Don Mattingly - \$50	Mario Lemieux - \$45
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Sterling Sharpe - \$45	Ryne Sandberg - \$45	Kathy Ireland - \$55
Phil Simms - \$35	Frank Thomas - \$45	Elle Macpherson - \$45
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how batting talent should be judged," the Padres outfielder says. "It's the most important standard in baseball. It means more than any award or honor."

Six players collected hit No. 3,000 during the decade of the '70s, just one—Rod Carew—in the '80s. But the '90s could prove the most prolific decade for fraternity membership, thanks to a series of baseball expansions that has diminished the overall quality of pitching. In ad-

Molitor, Gwynn and the Minnesota Twins' Kirby Puckett. Wade Boggs, Cal Ripken Jr. and Ryne Sandberg are longer shots.

Ripken, for instance, has 913 hits to go, likely a six-year chore. "But Cal's top goal is to break Lou Gehrig's consecutive-games record," Billy Williams notes. "And if or when he does that, he may cut back his playing time, which could stop him short of 3,000."

you've lost your motivation, your desire to go to the ballpark. I know that happened to me."

A few of the venerable big names still playing the game who seemingly will fall well short of the magic number include Ozzie Smith, Rickey Henderson, Andre Dawson, Don Mattingly, Joe Carter, Jose Canseco and Will Clark. But don't think missing the 3,000 mark automatically shuts you out of the Hall of Fame. Thank-



"The 3,000 Hit Club is how batting talent should be judged. It's the most important standard in baseball. It means more than any award or honor."
—Tony Gwynn, San Diego Padres



dition to the triumvirate of Brett, Yount and Winfield, seven others could join the club before the end of the century.

Who's next?

"Eddie Murray, without a doubt," offers Gwynn. "Eddie told me he wants 3,000 so bad he can taste it." Murray's arrival date could be sometime in 1995, probably as a designated hitter in the American League. His 174 hits last year with the New York Mets raised his career total to 2,820. He'll smack 'em for the Cleveland Indians this year.

"You know Eddie has incentive because 3,000 hits may be the only way he can make the Hall," Gwynn says. "On a personal level, Eddie has had his differences with the media who vote on the Hall of Fame. If the voters don't like you, the only way you can get their vote is to put big numbers under their noses and defy them to vote against you."

Others who could reach 3,000 in the '90s are the Toronto Blue Jays' Paul

Sandberg says he hadn't given 3,000 hits a lot of thought until late last season when he decided it was within his reach. "I could do it in five more years—if I stay healthy," he says. But he wasn't healthy in 1993, missing the first and last months of the season with injuries.

The 21st century no doubt will have its own 3,000 clubbers. Robbie Alomar, Ken Griffey Jr., Frank Thomas, Ruben Sierra, John Olerud and Carlos Baerga all are young American Leaguers who could make a run at 3,000. In the National League, Barry Bonds, Gregg Jefferies, Mark Grace, Marquis Grissom and Lenny Dykstra have at least a fighting chance.

"But it's hard to predict how long today's young stars will remain in the game, considering the salary levels," cautions Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson, who wound up his own phenomenal career 416 hits shy of the 3,000 mark. "Sometimes when you get financially comfortable, you wake up one morning and find

Ken Griffey Jr. (right) is one of the young stars on a 3,000-hit pace; Dave Winfield reached the magical plateau last year.

fully, that's not the case. Other factors, such as home runs, runs scored and impact on the game are also taken into account. After all, while some may believe that 3,000 hits is a batter's most important standard, there are plenty of non-3,000 clubbers, Reggie Jackson included, who contributed a bit to the Grand Old Game. Check out this list of Club 2,000 members: Frank Robinson, Rogers Hornsby, Mel Ott, Brooks Robinson, Lou Gehrig, Ted Williams, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth. ★

Dave Nightingale is an Orange County-based free-lance writer.

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FUTURE 3,000-CLUB MEMBERS?

THE OLD GUARD

Name	Age	Seasons	1993 Hits	Career Total	Will He Make It?	Comment
Eddie Murray	38	17	174	2820	Yes	Target date 1995, but needs two-year DH job in Cleveland.
Andre Dawson	39	18	126	2630	No	He'd need three more seasons, but his legs are too tired.
Paul Molitor	37	16	211	2492	Yes	He should reach goal in 1996 if he can hang on that long.
Wade Boggs	35	12	169	2267	Maybe	Possibly by 1998, but does he want to play five more years?
Lou Whitaker	36	17	111	2199	No	Near end of career, 800 more hits is simply beyond reach.
Alan Trammell	35	17	132	2182	No	He may have long-shot chance, but injury history is roadblock.
Rickey Henderson	35	15	139	2139	No	Walk totals, real or imagined, and injuries will stop him short.

THE VETERANS

Name	Age	Seasons	1993 Hits	Career Total	Will He Make It?	Comment
Cal Ripken Jr.	33	13	165	2087	Maybe	Possibility in '99 unless "ironman"-record bid wears him out.
Ryne Sandberg	34	13	141	2080	Maybe	He's eyeing '98 arrival, if not injured; skeptics abound.
Tim Lincecum	34	14	127	2050	No	Not healthy enough to last the necessary seven more years.
Tony Gwynn	33	11	175	2037	Yes	Extremely motivated; thinks he's a lock by end of '98 season.
Kirby Puckett	32	10	186	1996	Yes	Outside chance to reach total in 1998; a certainty in '99.
Don Mattingly	32	11	154	1908	No	Recent injuries cloud chances; lack of speed a detriment.
Julio Franco	32	12	154	1784	No	Injury-prone; not motivated to last the eight years it would take.

IN THEIR PRIME

Name	Age	Seasons	1993 Hits	Career Total	Will He Make It?	Comment
Ruben Sierra	28	8	147	1307	Maybe	Has the talent, but another year like 1993 eliminates his bid.
Will Clark	30	8	139	1278	No	Injury problems won't let him go the 10 years it would take.
Barry Bonds	29	8	181	1165	No	He could make it in 2004, but he'll stop to count his money.
Barry Larkin	29	8	121	1045	No	Recent history of injuries may keep him from 2,000.
Mark Grace	29	6	193	1033	No	He's hot, but he got too late a start compared to others.
Gregg Jefferies	26	6	186	830	Maybe	Has desire, ability to go the 12, 13 years it would take.
Marquis Grissom	25	4	188	610	No	Despite big '93 season, he doesn't have enough hits for his age.

THE KIDS

Name	Age	Seasons	1993 Hits	Career Total	Will He Make It?	Comment
Roberto Alomar	26	6	192	1054	Yes	An odds-on candidate for 3,000 if he can go the distance.
Ken Griffey Jr.	24	5	180	832	Yes	Has speed, ability, if untold wealth doesn't get in his way.
Carlos Baerga	25	4	200	657	Maybe	Another 200-hit season in '94 will end current skepticism.
Gary Sheffield	25	5	145	616	No	Great skills, but injuries, erratic behavior doom his chances.
Robin Ventura	26	5	145	615	No	Outside shot with longevity, but lack of speed is the killer.
Frank Thomas	25	4	174	600	No	He's too bulky, injury-prone to last the 13, 14 years it would take.
Delino DeShields	25	4	142	575	No	Has youth, speed, talent, but never has put up big hit totals.
John Olerud	25	5	200	544	No	Didn't bloom until 1993; too slow to be a serious contender.
Juan Gonzalez	24	4	166	497	No	More than just a slugger in '93, but needs higher hit totals—fast.

1983

N.C. STATE VS. HOUSTON



A LAST-SECOND SHOT HELPS THE WOLFPACK COMPLETE ITS CINDERELLA RUN FOR THE NATIONAL TITLE BY JEFF RYAN

When the best sports upsets are argued over beers, it's not the 1983 North Carolina State hoops team that's mentioned along with the '69 Mets and the '80 U.S. Olympic hockey team. No, it's Jim Valvano. The conversation starts like this: "Hey, remember when Jimmy Vee beat Houston for the national championship?"

Only someone so full of energy, full of belief, and full of himself could have overshadowed a team as worthy of the spotlight as the champion Wolfpack. But Valvano's personality came at us like a four-on-one fast break. It forced its way into our memories and has stayed there for the past 11 years.

And in the thin air of Albuquerque, N.M., on the night of April 4, 1983, it got into the hearts, and guts, and lungs of his underpublicized, underappreciated, underdog players. They responded, toppling the mighty Houston Cougars, 54-52, at the buzzer.

"[Valvano] was always a big dreamer," says Dereck Whittenburg, a guard on the title team. "But I think he really believed deep down inside that we were gonna do it."

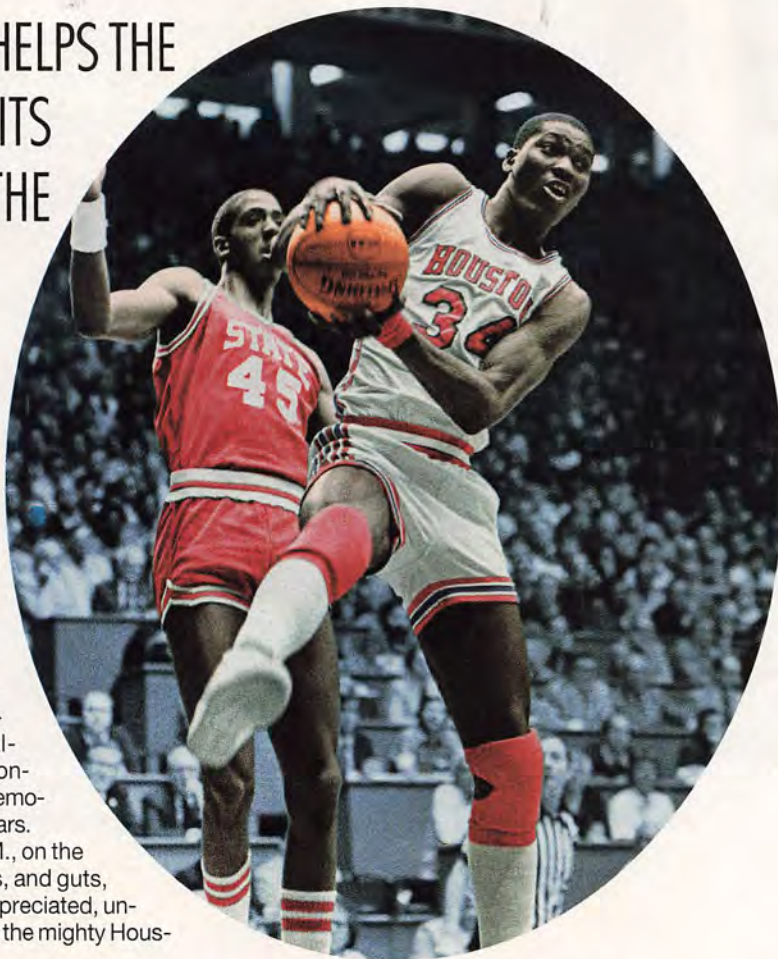
Was Jimmy Vee crazy? Houston wasn't just good; the Cougars could be downright awe-inspiring. They entered the championship game of the NCAA tournament with a 31-2 record and the No. 1 ranking in the nation. Dubbed "Phi Slama Jama" for their rim-rattling, monster dunks, frat brothers Akeem (now Hakeem) Olajuwon, Clyde Drexler, Larry Micheaux, Barry Anders and Michael Young played like performers in an aerial show. They considered a fast break to be a means of expression and a dunk to be an exclamation point.

The Wolfpack was thought to have no chance, but Valvano wasn't about to write a concession speech. "Don't we have a chance?" he asked anyone who approached him the day before the game. "Kentucky doesn't have a chance. UCLA doesn't have a chance. They're not playing for the championship. We are, so we must have a chance!"

"I was ready for them, but I don't think my players were," says Guy Lewis, coach of the Houston squad. "And I didn't know much about Valvano as a motivator, to tell you the truth."

Lewis was introduced to Jimmy Vee's technique early. North Carolina State's Thurl Bailey plagiarized Houston's psychological playbook by dunking for the first basket of the game, and the Wolfpack took control by slowing the tempo and crowding its defenders around the basket. Houston didn't get its first dunk for 15 minutes, and North Carolina State led at the half, 33-25.

Houston came out in the second half determined to control not



The Cougars' Olajuwon did his part, scoring 20 points and grabbing 18 rebounds in defeat.

just the court but the air above it too. The Cougars went on a 17-2 run to start the half, taking a 42-35 lead. But then, strangely, Lewis told his team to slow it down, take time off the clock and force North Carolina State's defense away from the basket.

"Vee must have thanked the heavens," says Mike Francesa, then a production assistant with CBS and today a sports-radio host on WFAN in New York. "Just when N.C. State was getting knocked out, Lewis coached himself into a corner."

The Wolfpack rallied, began fouling, and watched as one Houston free throw after another clanged off the rim. With 1:59 remaining, Whittenburg's jumper tied the score at 52. The Wolfpack fouled Houston guard Alvin Franklin, who missed the front end of a one-and-one.

GREAT GAMES

FINAL TEAM STATISTICS

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP Albuquerque, N.M., April 4, 1983

	1st Half	2nd Half	Final
Houston	25	27	52
N.C. State	33	21	54

HOUSTON (52)

	Total													
	Min.	FG/FGA	Pct.	FT/FTA	Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	PF	S	Bk	TP	PPM	
DREXLER, C.	25	1/5	.200	2/2	1.000	2	0	1	4	0	0	4	.160	
MICHEAUX, L.	18	2/6	.333	0/0	.000	6	0	3	1	0	0	4	.222	
OLAJUWON, A.	38	7/15	.467	6/7	.857	18	1	2	1	0	7	20	.526	
FRANKLIN, A.	35	2/6	.333	0/1	.000	0	3	3	0	0	0	4	.114	
YOUNG, M.	30	3/10	.300	0/4	.000	8	1	0	0	0	1	6	.200	
GETTYS, R.	20	2/2	1.000	0/0	.000	2	2	0	3	0	0	4	.200	
ANDERS, B.	17	4/9	.444	2/5	.400	2	1	4	2	0	0	10	.588	
WILLIAMS, B.	10	0/1	.000	0/0	.000	4	1	0	3	0	0	0	.000	
ROSE, D.	7	0/1	.000	0/0	.000	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	.000	
TOTALS	200	21/55	.382	10/19	.526	43	9	13	16	0	8	52	.260	

NORTH CAROLINA STATE (54)

	Total													
	Min.	FG	FGA	Pct.	FT/FTA	Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	PF	S	Bk	TP	PPM
GANNON, T.	18	3/4	.750	1/2	.500	1	2	0	3	1	0	7	.389	
WHITTENBURG, D.	39	6/17	.353	2/2	1.000	5	1	2	3	0	0	14	.359	
MYERS, E.	1	0/0	.000	0/0	.000	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	
BATTLE, A.	4	0/1	.000	2/2	1.000	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	.500	
LOWE, S.	40	4/9	.444	0/1	.000	0	8	0	2	5	0	8	.200	
BAILEY, T.	39	7/16	.438	1/2	.500	5	0	1	1	0	0	15	.385	
CHARLES, L.	25	2/7	.286	0/0	.000	7	0	0	2	0	1	4	.160	
MCQUEEN, C.	34	1/5	.200	2/2	1.000	12	1	2	4	1	1	4	.118	
TOTALS	200	23/59	.390	8/11	.727	32	13	6	16	7	2	54	.270	

Team Rebounds: N.C. State 2; Houston 1. Disqualified: None. Technical fouls: None.

North Carolina State played for the last shot, but with five seconds left, Drexler deflected a pass. Whittenburg retrieved it, turned, and fired a 30-footer toward the basket. In what unfolded in an instant but will be replayed forever, forward Lorenzo Charles snuck behind Olajuwon, grabbed the dying jumper, and jammed it through the hoop. Vee for victory!

"My best pass in four years," says Whittenburg. "In reality, it was a shot, but I always tell people it was a pass."

Whittenburg takes particular delight in the win because, although he concedes it was a huge upset, he remembers bristling at some experts' beliefs that North Carolina State and Houston didn't deserve to be mentioned in the same sentence.

"That season, we beat Virginia, North Carolina, UNLV," he says. "We weren't playing the Sisters of the Poor."

The heartbreak loss still pains Lewis, who blames it on the fatigue his team felt after beating Louisville in the semifinals. Lewis and his Cougars would get one more chance, returning to the championship game the following season but losing to Patrick Ewing and Georgetown.

Valvano, on the other hand, rode the crest of victory for years but never rode back to the Final Four. In 1990, he left North Carolina State amid allegations of NCAA violations. Tragically, on April 28, 1993, he died of bone cancer at the age of 47. Before he passed away, though, a frail Valvano returned to North Carolina State for a 10-year reunion of the title team, a squad that was the first in NCAA history to win the crown with as many as 10 losses on its record.

Jimmy Vee spoke, and tears flowed. Everyone listened to the man with the New York accent talk about believing in one's self, never quitting. For a few brief moments that afternoon, Valvano wasn't fighting cancer, he was back in the NCAA finals fighting formidable Houston.

And for a few brief moments, the crowd didn't see a dying man standing there. They saw Jimmy Vee being lifted up into the thin air of Albuquerque by his players. Phi Slama Jama had already been cut down, and Vee, scissors in hand, was about to go after the net. ★

Jeff Ryan is a New York-based free-lance writer.

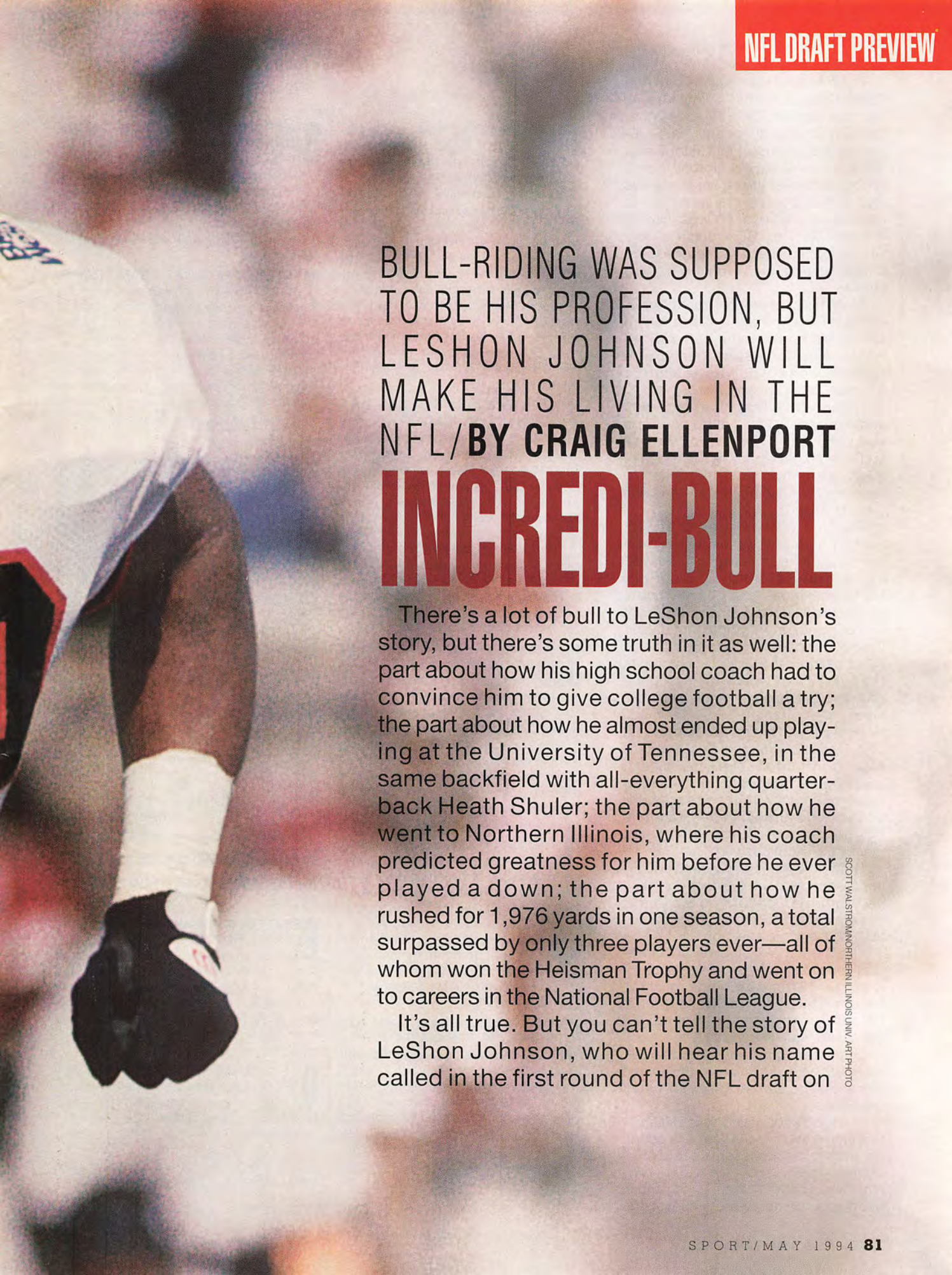
Coach Jim Valvano is sky-high after his Wolfpack stuns Houston for the national title.



1983 N.C. STATE VS. HOUSTON







BULL-RIDING WAS SUPPOSED
TO BE HIS PROFESSION, BUT
LESHON JOHNSON WILL
MAKE HIS LIVING IN THE
NFL/**BY CRAIG ELLENPORT**

INCREDI-BULL

There's a lot of bull to LeShon Johnson's story, but there's some truth in it as well: the part about how his high school coach had to convince him to give college football a try; the part about how he almost ended up playing at the University of Tennessee, in the same backfield with all-everything quarterback Heath Shuler; the part about how he went to Northern Illinois, where his coach predicted greatness for him before he ever played a down; the part about how he rushed for 1,976 yards in one season, a total surpassed by only three players ever—all of whom won the Heisman Trophy and went on to careers in the National Football League.

It's all true. But you can't tell the story of LeShon Johnson, who will hear his name called in the first round of the NFL draft on

SCOTT WALSTROM/NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIV. ART PHOTO

April 24, without talking bull—that is, bull-riding.

Friends and teammates call him Cowboy because that's what he is. A kid from Haskell, Okla., whose father and two older brothers are rodeo professionals, Johnson's first love was riding bulls. He played football in high school but never took it seriously. His high school coach persuaded him to try playing at a junior college, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, and it is there where Johnson began to realize there was a future in running with the piskin.

Since his sophomore year at Northeastern Oklahoma, he has taken an extended hiatus from bull-riding, which is far too risky when you're worth millions of dollars as a future NFL star.

"I can't take that chance," says Johnson, a 6-0, 201-pound bull in his own right. "But if I had stayed with it, I feel I would have been at the top of it. Because once I dedicate myself to something, I'm going to do whatever it takes to be the best."

The Cowboy has size and speed, traits that might make him the best back available in a draft loaded with running-back talent. Last spring, Northern Illinois head coach Charlie Sadler proclaimed Johnson "the best running back in America east of San Diego," in deference to San Diego State's Marshall Faulk. It still appears the Aztecs star will be the first back selected, but Johnson won't be far behind.

"He's a guy that really jumps out at you," says Philadelphia Eagles offensive coordinator Zeke Bratkowski, who coached Johnson in the Senior Bowl in January. "He's got tremendous speed and quickness, and he hits the point of attack with a lot of power. He's impressive."

Draft guru Mel Kiper Jr. was equally impressed with the player who fell 24 yards short of becoming the fourth back in college football history to rush for 2,000 yards in a season.

"He's got that jet-power acceleration you see in only the great backs," Kiper said after watching him in the Senior Bowl. "He gets through the hole before the defenders have a chance to react to the play."

But if it's praise you want to hear, you need go no further than the source himself. The Cowboy doesn't lack confidence.

"I watch a lot of pro football and I feel like, wow, my chances are gonna be great to be successful in the NFL," Johnson says. "You see a lot of running backs dancing around in the hole, but that's not me. At the pro level, the

THE 1994 NFL

1 CINCINNATI BENGALS—MARSHALL FAULK, RB, SAN DIEGO STATE

Despite the adage, "Defense wins championships," the last three Super Bowls have been won with offense. Ohio State defensive end Dan "Big Daddy" Wilkinson, who'd team with last year's first-rounder, John Copeland, would be a sound choice. But the combo of Faulk and improving quarterback David Klingler will provide the kind of offensive nucleus that Emmitt Smith and Troy Aikman give the Cowboys. We're not saying Faulk and Klingler will be as productive as Smith and Aikman, but they'll make the Bengals' offense dangerous for years.

2 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS—DAN WILKINSON, DE, OHIO STATE

"Big Daddy" will automatically improve this defense. If Steve Emtman can successfully return from serious knee surgery (he's due back in the middle of next season), the Colts' defensive line will be awesome. Another possibility here, if the Colts are ready to dump Jeff George, is to take either of the two top quarterbacks, Trent Dilfer or Heath Shuler. If the Colts draft a QB, it will create a ripple effect through the rest of this draft, and you can bet offensive-minded head coach Ted Marchibroda is thinking about it.

3 WASHINGTON REDSKINS—TRENT DILFER, QB, FRESNO STATE

Everybody is assuming that the Redskins are giving up on Mark Rypien. If the strong-armed, deadly accurate Dilfer weren't available, they might think twice. If Dilfer is available, they'll jump on him. If, for some reason, the 'Skins decide to give Rypien another chance, Notre Dame offensive tackle Aaron Taylor would make a terrific Hog.

4 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—JOHN THIERRY, OLB, ALCORN STATE

The Pats have plenty of money at their disposal to buy some impact free-agent defensive players such as the Eagles' Seth Joyner. But it would be difficult for Bill Parcells to pass on Thierry, who some scouts say has the potential to become the most dominating linebacker since Lawrence Taylor. Another strong possibility is Notre Dame defensive lineman Bryant Young.

5 LOS ANGELES RAMS—HEATH SHULER, QB, TENNESSEE

Running back Jerome Bettis was unstoppable at times as a rookie last year, and that was when the opposition knew he was getting the ball. Imagine how good Bettis will be once he has a quality quarterback in the lineup. Another receiver would help the Rams, too, but a Chuck Knox-coached team isn't likely to take one in the first round.

6 TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS—LESHON JOHNSON, RB, NORTHERN ILLINOIS

The Buccaneers played better during the latter part of last season but still were relying on the likes of Vince Workman as their feature back. No use waiting for Reggie Cobb to fulfill his potential when LeShon Johnson appears to be the right prescription for Sam Wyche's sickly offense.

7 ATLANTA FALCONS—SAM ADAMS, DE, TEXAS A&M

The Falcons have all the skill players they need on offense, and the offensive line features a pair of future Pro Bowlers in Bob Whitfield and Lincoln Kennedy. The defense needs help all over, so they might as well start up front. Linebacker might be a more pressing need; Nebraska's Trev Alberts is a possibility here. But Adams has potential to be a big-time pass rusher.



Heath Shuler would be a nice fit for the Rams, who need a QB.

8 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS—AARON TAYLOR, OT, NOTRE DAME

Now that Seattle has its franchise player in quarterback Rick Mirer, it needs to protect him. It would also be nice to give Mirer a few more targets to throw to, but wide receiver is a deep position in this draft, so the Seahawks can address that need later. Taylor can make this offense better—right away.

9 CLEVELAND BROWNS—TREV ALBERTS, LB, NEBRASKA

Clay Matthews can't go on forever, and Alberts is the kind of potentially dominating outside linebacker that Bill Belichick can have some fun with. If the Browns satisfy this need through free agency, look for them to grab cornerback Antonio Langham or receiver Charles Johnson.

DRAFT PREVIEW

10 PHOENIX CARDINALS—SHANTE CARVER, DE/LB, ARIZONA STATE Nothing goes right for the Cards. Last year's first-round pick, running back Garrison Hearst, went down with a knee injury, as did former first-rounder Eric Swann. Buddy Ryan didn't have much time to devote to scouting after being hired as coach and GM, but he's an excellent judge of talent. Look for Phoenix to take homeboy Carver, who played his college career in Sun Devils Stadium. Carver is a fierce pass rusher, but his "tweener" size makes him a questionable pick this high.

11 CHICAGO BEARS—CHARLES JOHNSON, WR, COLORADO The Bears, who can also use some help on the offensive line and the defensive line (assuming Richard Dent signs elsewhere), have a plethora of exciting receivers to choose from. Johnson is the obvious pick for several reasons: He's got a good head on his shoulders, he can catch the intermediate passes as well as stretch the defense, and his success at Colorado means he should be able to handle the cold weather in Chicago.

12 NEW ORLEANS SAINTS—DARNAY SCOTT, WR, SAN DIEGO STATE If the Saints make this pick, they'll finally have a game-breaking receiver who opposing defenses will have to take seriously. Here's a long shot: Maybe they'd consider trading this pick in a package for one of the top five spots so they can get a quarterback. (Let's face it, the Saints aren't marching anywhere with Wade Wilson.) They also could take Boston College quarterback Glenn Foley with this pick, but that would be a reach.

13 NEW YORK JETS—BRYANT YOUNG, DL, NOTRE DAME The Jets signed former Giant Leonard Marshall to fill their "eagle tackle" position vacated by Dennis Byrd. Marshall was a bust. Young has the strength and speed to perfectly fill that spot. Another possibility: The Jets badly need a game-breaking receiver to complement Rob Moore. Alabama's David Palmer would be a fine choice.

14 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES—AUBREY BEAVERS, LB, OKLAHOMA Facing the possible free-agent departures of defensive end Clyde Simmons and linebacker Seth Joyner, you can be sure the Eagles have been looking closely at those positions. Oregon defensive lineman Romeo Bandison would be hard to pass up, but after drafting junior Leonard Renfro last year, the Eagles can't afford to take another raw talent who may need a few years to reach his peak.

15 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS (from San Diego)—ANTONIO LANGHAM, CB, ALABAMA Would you be shocked to see the 49ers take a receiver in the first round? Jerry Rice and John Taylor aren't getting any younger, so with two first-round selections, San Francisco might go in that direction. But not here, not with Langham still on the board. The 49ers' secondary has been burned in the last

two NFC championship games. Langham never gets toasted.

16 MIAMI DOLPHINS—ROMEO BANDISON, DT, OREGON Bandison grew up in the Netherlands and didn't play football until his senior year of high school. No matter. The 6-5, 280-pounder has the potential to be a dominating force as an interior lineman, and that's something the Dolphins dearly need. Considering the way the offense faltered the last two seasons when center Jeff Uhlenhake was injured, Notre Dame's Tim Ruddy wouldn't be a bad pick either.

17 PITTSBURGH STEELERS—JOHNIE MORTON, WR, USC The Steelers may have thought they had a steal in third-round pick Andre Hastings last year, but that didn't pan out. Hastings was a junior when he came out and he might improve, but the Steelers can't take a chance. Lately, whenever the Steelers are forced into passing situations, their receivers have trouble getting open. At USC, opposing teams keyed on Morton, yet he always found a way to get open. Perfect fit.



Look for the Colts to grab Dan Wilkinson, a defensive force.

18 MINNESOTA VIKINGS (from Denver)—BERNARD WILLIAMS, OT, GEORGIA Maybe the Vikings can package their two first-round picks and trade up to get Dilfer or Shuler. Despite Jim McMahon's gutsy performance in a playoff loss to the Giants, the punky QB isn't the long-term answer for the Vikes. He may not even be the short-term answer. Minnesota's next most pressing need is offensive linemen, and Williams (6-9, 310) will help.

19 VIKINGS—MARK DIXON, G, VIRGINIA If they can't get a quarterback, why not load up on the line? Dennis Green might have deserved some coach-of-the-year recognition for making the playoffs last season. He had to field an offense

hole closes so fast, you've got to be right there when it opens. I feel whatever team picks me up won't be sorry."

No square dancing for this Cowboy. Just full speed, straight ahead. That's how he managed to rush for 3,314 yards in two seasons at Northern Illinois. His success made Charlie Sadler look like a prophet. It was Sadler who, before Johnson ever played a down for Northern Illinois, predicted that the Cowboy would rush for 1,500 yards in 1992.

"I was wrong," Sadler says with a chuckle. Yeah, he was way off; in his first season of Division I-A football, Johnson had to settle for 1,338 yards, good for eighth in the nation.

That was Sadler's second season in DeKalb, Ill., after spending 13 years as an assistant coach in the Big Eight Conference, the last seven with Oklahoma. Sadler has seen his share of great running backs.

"It was really pretty easy to identify the fact that LeShon had the characteristics to be the great player he's proved to be," he says. The frustrating part for Sadler was that he came to this realization in 1991, his first season at Northern and Johnson's redshirt season. While his team staggered to a 2-9 record, Sadler had to bite his lip watching this kid on the scout team tear up his defense in practice.

"The thing was," Sadler recalls, "LeShon is such a competitive young man that even being in practice—and he knew he was ineligible to participate that season—every day was kind of his game day out there. And realistically, he made us look shabby almost every day. I'm not sure that our defense didn't suffer a little bit because of that."

If Sadler was drooling over the prospect of getting Johnson into the lineup, imagine how folks at Tennessee must have felt. After gaining 1,301 yards and scoring 16 touchdowns in two years at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Johnson was set to transfer to Tennessee but fell three credits short of qualifying. How scary would the Volunteers have been with Johnson lining up in the backfield and Heisman Trophy runner-up Heath Shuler at quarterback?

"I think about that sometimes," admits Johnson. "I wonder if the Vols would've given me the ball as much as I wanted. When I went to Northern, they told me they were gonna build an offense around me and I just had to do my job. That's what I kept in mind and it worked out that way. Everything turned out great."

That's where the argument about

playing inferior competition falls short. Tennessee's competition in the Southeastern Conference is much tougher than the Big West opponents on Northern Illinois' schedule. Yet the Volunteers have other weapons to account for. Teams playing Northern Illinois the last two years had a simple defensive game plan: Stop the Cowboy.

"They knew," says Sadler, but they couldn't stop him.

The coach also counters the quality-of-competition argument with statistics from the tougher games. "We did play against Indiana, which was a very good team, a bowl team, and we played against Iowa, also a bowl team. Out of those games, he averaged 218 yards, so that's some pretty good competition in my book."

The Cowboy, in fact, set a Kinnick Stadium record by rushing for 306 yards against the Hawkeyes. He had just 85 yards at halftime, prompting former Hawkeyes great Ed Podolak to declare on the local radio broadcast that Johnson is good—"but [Michigan junior] Tyrone Wheatley is better."

It was Podolak's stadium rushing mark that Johnson shattered, breaking an 81-yard touchdown run along the way. After the game, Podolak amended his assessment of Johnson's talent.

"Tyrone Wheatley," he said, "can't carry LeShon Johnson's jockstrap." Said Iowa head coach Hayden Fry, "When he ran, he was like a blur."

A hip pointer suffered in the 1993 season finale at Mississippi limited Johnson to a career-low 59 yards. Nevertheless, he had rushed for 1,976 yards, easily tops in the nation. Not reaching 2,000 yards may have been a disappointment, but only three players have ever rushed for more yards in one season: Barry Sanders (2,628 in 1988), Marcus Allen (2,342 in 1981), and Mike Rozier (2,148 in 1983). Fine company indeed.

Johnson has been in good company since his junior-college days. The only two players to rush for more yards at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M are former NFL great James Wilder and current San Diego Chargers back Marion Butts. And while at Northeastern Oklahoma, Johnson was a teammate of wide receiver Chris Penn, who transferred to Tulsa and led the nation in receiving last season. Further down the line, Johnson predicts big things for his stepbrother, Michael Mayfield. "He broke all my high school records," Johnson says. Mayfield has committed to Pittsburg State (Kan.), the school that produced the Phoenix Cardinals Ronald Moore, a 1,000-yard rusher last

DRAFT

BRIAN TIRPAK

that lost three very good linemen—Gary Zimmerman, Kirk Lowdermilk and Brian Habib. If there's a good linebacker available, the Vikings might go that route instead.

20 DETROIT LIONS—AARON GLENN, CB, TEXAS A&M The Lions' secondary was ravaged by injuries last season, but that's no excuse for the blown coverage that allowed Green Bay's Sterling Sharpe to get so wide open on the game-winning touchdown that knocked Detroit out of the playoffs. Langham and Glenn are the best available corners, and the Lions had better hope one of them is available here.

21 GREEN BAY PACKERS—ERRICT RHETT, RB, FLORIDA After getting knocked out of the playoffs by Emmitt Smith and the Cowboys, who better to draft than the player who broke Smith's all-time school rushing record? Green Bay could use a top receiver to take pressure off Sharpe, and they'd also do well to take a center or offensive tackle. But the Packers have gone far too long without a major-league running back, and Rhett is big-time.

22 LOS ANGELES RAIDERS—GREG HILL, RB, TEXAS A&M If we're right about the Packers taking Rhett, expect Raiders owner Al Davis to pound the table and curse someone. The Raiders would jump all over Rhett if they could (maybe they'll trade up with the Vikings). But if they can't, Davis will have his choice from the next echelon of fine running backs: Hill, Nebraska's Calvin Jones, Texas Tech's Byron "Bam" Morris, Arizona's Chuck Levy and Arizona State's Mario Bates.

23 NEW YORK GIANTS—WILLIE MCGINEST, LB, USC If David Palmer is still on the board, the receiver-thin Giants would be crazy to pass on him. But the only receiver George Young ever took in the first round was Mark Ingram (1987), and he's no longer with the team. The Giants face their first season since 1980 without Lawrence Taylor, so it's imperative they find a starting outside linebacker. McGinest responded well to John Robinson at USC last year. He could be the answer.

24 HOUSTON OILERS—COREY SAWYER, CB, FLORIDA STATE That's all the cocky Oilers' defense needs—a Florida State cornerback. Houston's secondary suffered so many injuries last year and still played well. But they can use some help, and they're set at most every other position. Despite drafting offensive tackle Brad Hopkins in the first round last year, the Oilers should think about drafting more linemen early. Pro Bowlers Bruce Matthews and Mike Munchak won't be around forever.

25 49ERS—DAVID PALMER, WR, ALABAMA It seems unlikely that Palmer will drop this far, but if he does, you



Strong-armed Trent Dilfer figures to be the first QB taken.

can bet the 49ers will jump on him. Realistically, they'll end up drafting a linebacker—perhaps UCLA's Jamir Miller.

26 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS—CALVIN JONES, RB, NEBRASKA Marcus Allen will be back next season, but even if Allen leads the NFL in rushing TDs again, he can't carry the load at tailback. The Chiefs need a legitimate, young rushing threat to keep the pressure off Joe Montana. For a team that made the AFC championship game, they need a lot. Receiver, offensive tackle, fullback, nose tackle, inside linebacker and defensive back are all areas that could be addressed with this pick.

27 BUFFALO BILLS—TIM RUDDY, C, NOTRE DAME Pro Bowl center Kent Hull is 33. The Bills drafted Iowa center Mike Devlin in the fifth round last year, but Ruddy is a no-brainer. Other offensive-line spots could be stocked—offensive tackles Todd Steussie (Cal) and Marcus Spears (Northwestern Louisiana) are possibilities. The Bills sorely need a dose of speed on offense. Arizona running back Chuck Levy is a burner. The Bills need wide receiver help as well. Michigan's Derrick Alexander is a first-round sleeper.

28 DALLAS COWBOYS—ANTHONY PHILLIPS, DB, TEXAS A&M-KINGSVILLE What do you get the team that has everything? The Cowboys' secondary isn't the weak link some make it out to be, but Phillips is the kind of promising small-school prospect who could flourish in Dallas. Phillips has the size to play safety and the speed to play cornerback.

43 SAN DIEGO CHARGERS—CORY FLEMING, WR, TENNESSEE The Chargers' anemic offense can hardly afford to lose Pro Bowl receiver Anthony Miller to free agency. Even if they sign Miller, they can't afford to pass on drafting another receiver to help out.

46 DENVER BRONCOS—JEFF BURRIS, DB, NOTRE DAME The chances are less than 50-50 that Burris will be available at this stage of the second round, but the Broncos can sure use his athletic ability in their secondary, which was badly exposed by the Raiders in the season finale and wild-card playoff game last season. —Craig Ellenport

season.

One piece of information Johnson can readily pass on to his stepbrother is how to succeed at a small school without getting frustrated over lack of publicity. Not that Johnson didn't become frustrated himself from time to time—at one point last season, he practically dared ESPN to show a highlight of him—but he never let it affect his game.

"You see all these other players getting attention and they really hadn't done anything," Johnson says. "They're just at a bigger school. That did get kind of frustrating. I just tried even harder to prove myself."

With Florida State quarterback Charlie Ward such a runaway favorite to win the Heisman, Johnson didn't even worry about his chances in that race (he finished sixth in the voting, not bad but still somewhat of a snub considering the numbers he posted). What did get to the Cowboy was his runner-up status for the Doak Walker Award, given to the nation's best running back. The award went to Texas Tech junior Byron "Bam" Morris.

"I felt like that should have been mine," Johnson says. "That was a big upset. But it didn't work out in my favor and I've got to move on."

On Draft Day, he'll do just that. Given his choice, the Cowboy says he'd like to play for the Raiders, a team that certainly could use an impact running back. It's doubtful he'll be available, however, since the Raiders have the 22nd pick.

"If I can't go to the Raiders, I'd love to go to Chicago," says Johnson. "Chicago is just like home to me, and I feel I would fit into their system too."

The Bears pick 11th in the draft. Based on Johnson's strong showing at the Senior Bowl, they might not have a shot at him either.

"I spent the whole year comparing Marshall Faulk to Barry Sanders," Kiper said during the Senior Bowl telecast. "After seeing LeShon Johnson today, he's got to be talked about in that same area as a game-breaking superblue-chipper."

For a kid who didn't start playing organized football until the seventh grade, Johnson has adapted well to sudden success. His experience riding bulls has taught him how to hold on—and how quickly you can fall on your butt.

"My dad's seen a lot of people ride, and he said I had the [proper] balance and the heart," says Johnson. "Really, it's the heart. A lot of people don't have the heart or the head to think that they can ride. That's all it takes."

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Rick Weinberg

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THE ALL-EXCITING TEAM

1B Will Clark, Rangers. With those facial expressions, that sweet swing and those pumping fists, who better to watch?

2B Roberto Alomar, Blue Jays. He's a .320 hitter with power, speed and run-producing skills, and he's a human highlight film on defense. "He's the best second baseman I've ever seen," says Jays pitcher Dave Stewart.

3B Dave Hollins, Phillies. Gotta love this guy. His uniform is dirty before batting practice.

SS Barry Larkin, Reds. Is there anyone as smooth and consistent? He hits for average, has power and speed, and is a brilliant defensive player.

OF Barry Bonds, Giants. Just the sight of him in the on-deck circle gets your adrenaline going. How great was his '93 season? With his .336 average, 46 homers and 123 RBI, he would've won the Triple Crown in five of the previous seven seasons. He also plays the best defense in the game.

OF Ken Griffey Jr., Mariners. At age 23, he slams 45 homers, hits .300 for the fourth straight year, knocks in more than 100 runs for the third consecutive season and plays spectacular defense. Even Bonds drools over him, pondering what numbers Junior will produce five years from now.

OF Kenny Lofton, Indians. Bad move, Astros. They'll always regret trading Lofton, who not only won the stolen-base crown but wound up fourth in hitting at .325. He plays center like Bonds plays left.

C Mike Piazza, Dodgers. Beginning his second season, he's already the best catcher in baseball. No rookie catcher in history had such a monster season: 35 homers, 112 RBI, .318 average, terrific defense.

SP Randy Johnson, Mariners. He's become the most dominant pitcher in the game. Proof? He had five games in which he fanned 14 or more batters—more than all other pitchers combined.

RP John Wetteland, Expos. Mitch Williams is right there as well, but you gotta love Wetteland, who's consistently clocked at 95 mph and could save 50 this year.

THE ALL-COMEBACK TEAM

1B Will Clark. His power production has dropped off big-time the last two seasons. He averaged 24 homers and 94 RBI in his first six seasons, 15 homers and 73 RBI in the last two. But after sign-

ing that \$30 million pact and being handed the Rangers' leadership role, look for Clark to hit 22-25 homers and knock in 100 runs.

2B Bip Roberts, Padres. He took a 50-percent pay cut and accepted a one-year deal, which means he'll be back on the free-agent market in October. He vows he won't repeat his disappointing .240-average, 18-RBI season. "I guarantee it," he says.

3B Edgar Martinez, Mariners. In 1992, he led the majors in hitting at .343, but he missed most of '93 with hamstring problems and wound up at .237. He tore up the winter leagues, though, at a .440 clip, leaving little doubt that he's back.

SS Pat Listach, Brewers. One of the most exciting players in '92, Listach (who might wind up playing second base) suffered through a horrible, injury-riddled sophomore year, going from .290, 54 steals and Rookie of the Year to .244 and 18 steals. "He'll be back around .300 with 50 steals," says a scout. "He's just too good a player not to rebound."

OF Ray Lankford, Cardinals. After a brilliant '92 season (.293, 20 HR, 86 RBI, 42 steals), Lankford was projected as an MVP candidate but flopped (.238, 14 steals, 45 RBI). "It won't happen again," he says.

OF Jose Canseco, Rangers. He'll be a full-time designated hitter (thank goodness), at least until July. "He loves DHing," says manager Kevin Kennedy, who looks for Canseco to hit 35-40 homers and steal 30 bases.

OF Luis Polonia, Yankees. He's a .300 hitter who, in the final year of his contract in '93, pressed and slumped to .271. He loves the stage, so expect him to have a big year on Broadway.

C Sandy Alomar Jr., Indians. This is the

year he stays healthy, catches 130 games and returns to rookie form, when he hit .290. Bank on 70-75 RBI as well. "I'm tired of missing games," he says.

RHP Doug Drabek, Astros. Here's one of last year's most improbable stories. Drabek is absolutely one of baseball's best. To fall to 9-18 is inexplicable. Look for 20-22 wins. "He's got too much pride [not to rebound big]," says Drabek's former manager, the



Barry Bonds

Pirates' Jim Leyland.

LHP Jim Abbott, Yankees. After ERAs of 2.89 and 2.77, Abbott ballooned to 4.37 last year. He didn't adjust well to life without Angels pitching coach Marcel Lachemann, but with Billy Connors around now, look for Abbott to bust out with perhaps his first 20-win season.

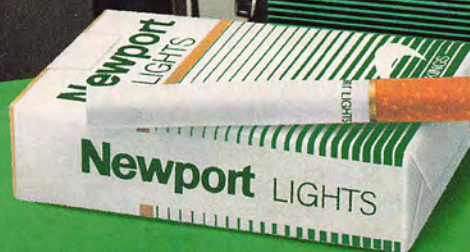
RP Rob Dibble, Reds. We know he's a maniac who should keep a psychiatrist's number inside his cap, but a mere 19 saves and an astronomical 6.48 ERA is even crazier. He'll return to the 30-35 save range.

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9-11 correct: Good fan
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3-5 correct: To the showers
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1 Last season, this major-leaguer (pictured) led the National League in doubles. Name him.

2 Which major-league pitcher lost the most games in 1993?

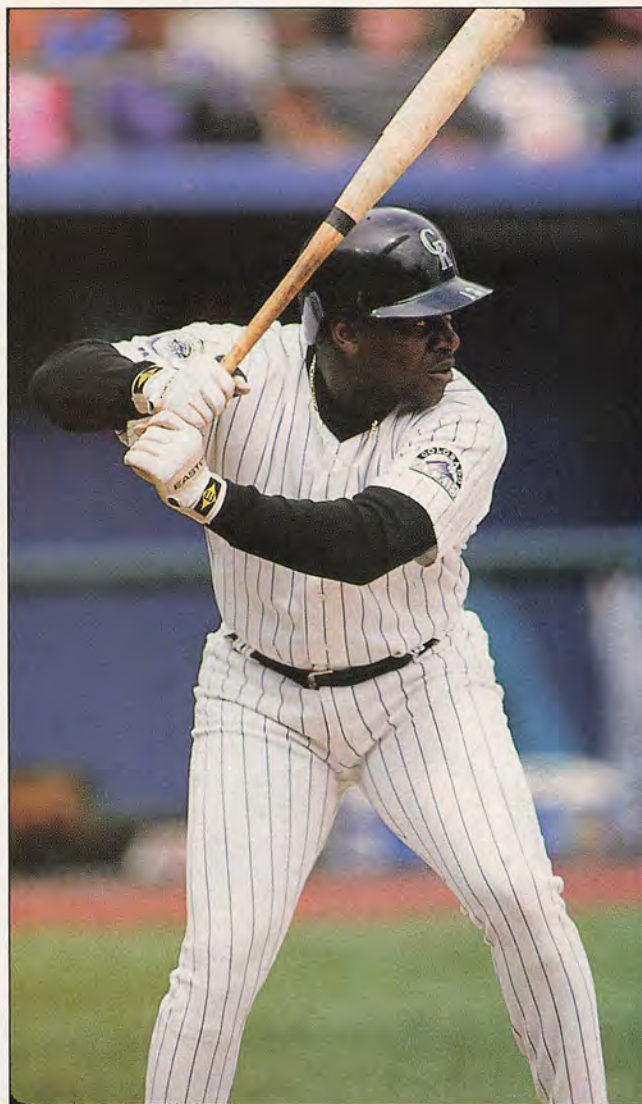
- A. Anthony Young
- B. Doug Drabek
- C. Scott Erickson
- D. Cal Eldred

3 Name the MVP of the 1993 baseball All-Star Game.

4 True or false: The New York Yankees were the last team to be swept in a World Series.

5 Match the player with his first major-league team.

- A. Joe Carter B. Brett Butler C. Daryl Boston
- D. Felix Jose
- 1. Braves 2. Cubs
- 3. A's 4. White Sox



SCOTT LINCENUM

6 Larry Brown has coached five NBA teams. Name them.

7 Which player holds the record for the most rebounds in an NBA Finals game?

- A. Bill Russell
- B. Moses Malone
- C. Wilt Chamberlain
- D. Bill Walton

8 Which golfer won the 1984 Masters?

- A. Curtis Strange
- B. Greg Norman
- C. Ben Crenshaw
- D. Larry Mize

9 Name the first golfer to win the Masters twice.



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10 Who was the last head coach to win consecutive Stanley Cup titles?

- A. Bob Johnson
- B. Scotty Bowman
- C. Glen Sather
- D. Al Arbour

11 Which is the only NHL team to win a Stanley Cup title in each of the last eight decades?

12 Last season, which NFL team had the worst record?

- A. Seattle
- B. Washington
- C. Indianapolis
- D. Cincinnati

13 Which player led the AFC in sacks last season?

- A. Bruce Smith
- B. Simon Fletcher
- C. Sean Jones
- D. Neil Smith

—William Ladson

STUMPER

Name the first rookie to win an IndyCar title.

APRIL 1994 STUMPER ANSWER

Nancy Lieberman-Cline ("Name the first woman to play in a men's pro league.")

THIS MONTH'S QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Charlie Hayes (45) 2. C. 10. C 11. Montreal Canadiens 7. A (40) 8. C 9. Horton Smith 4 and D-3-6. Nuggets, Nets, (Oakland A's) 5. A-2, B-1, C- (19) 3. Kirby Puckett 4. False

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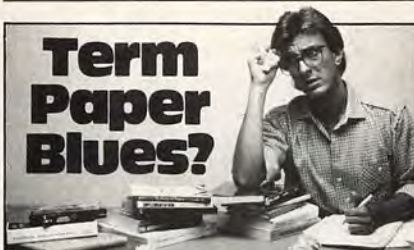
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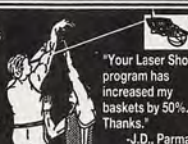
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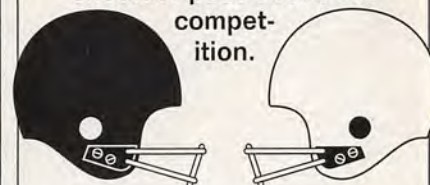
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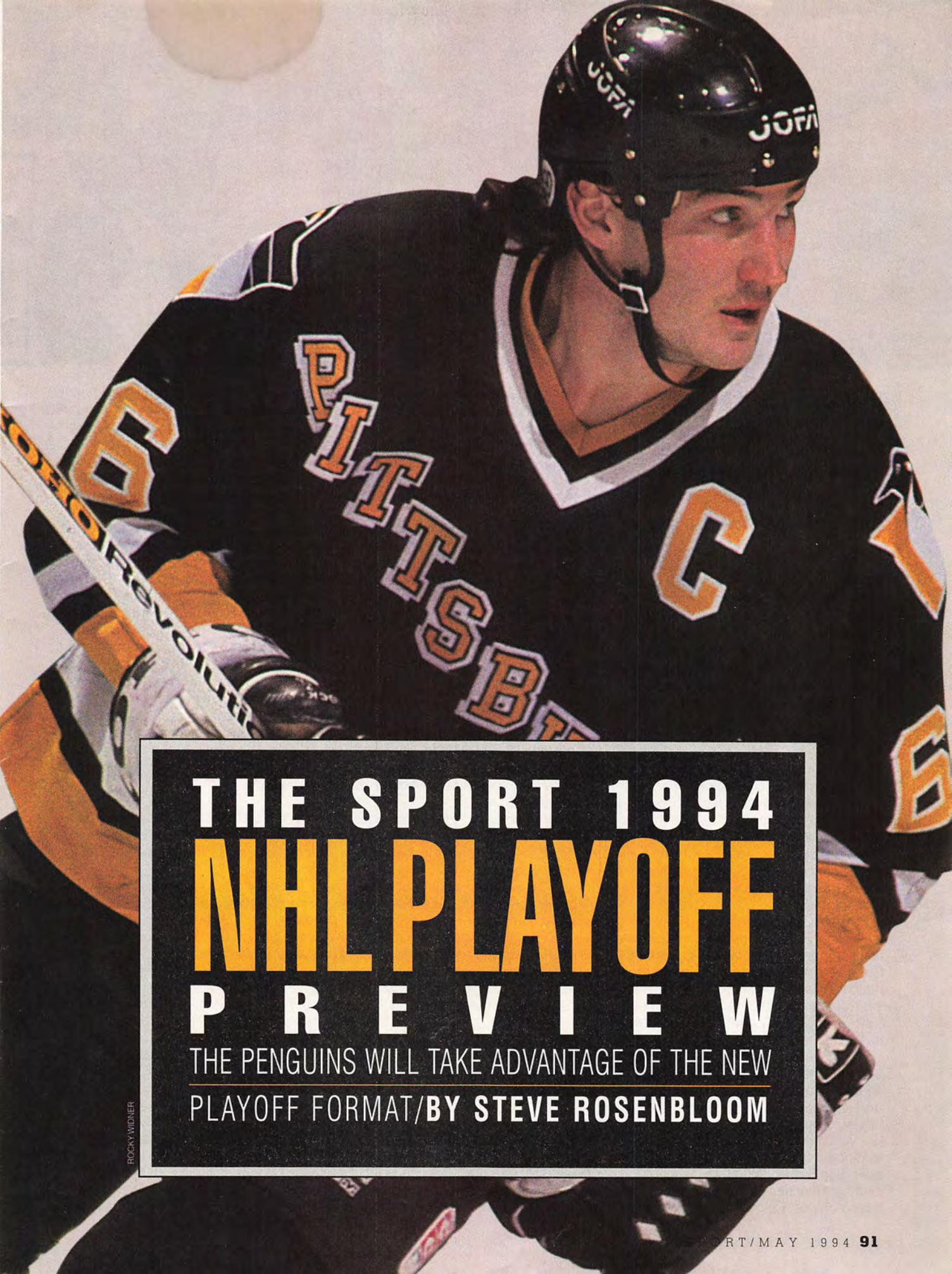
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ROCKY WIDNER



J. GIANUNDO/BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS

The Rangers' Mark Messier (left) is looking to win his sixth Stanley Cup, while the Bruins' Ray Bourque (middle) and the Blues' Brett Hull have yet to hoist Lord Stanley even once.

SCOTT LEVY/BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS

This figures to be weird, these Stanley Cup playoffs, because so much about the NHL has changed.

The league changed its playoff format, the conference names, the division names. And, of course, a bunch of players changed teams and a bunch of teams changed coaches.

But we're here—barring another players' strike—and you'll need a map, not to mention some false intensity early on, to get a grip on the proceedings.

The biggest change is the conference-style seedings, à la the NBA. No. 1 plays No. 8, No. 2 vs. No. 7, blah, blah, blah. Which means that the teams with the best records get in, and the playoff series with the best rivalries in the first two rounds are probably toast.

The NHL used to make you fight your way out of your division, which made the first two rounds the most intense and emotional—profitable too. You had teams matching up that had hated each other for years, meaning a team got a purple heart before it got the Stanley Cup, and fans loved it.

Now, well, expect some empty seats early on. The rivalries that were the NHL's salvation a decade ago are on waivers, and the league will need some years and a few upsets to replace them.

"We don't really have any rivalries," says Edmonton Oilers coach and general manager Glen Sather. "What we have done is eliminate rivalries. We used to have them with Winnipeg, Calgary, L.A. and Vancou-

ver, but we play less games against them and more games against Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas—and we have absolutely no rivalry with them. There's no intensity."

The league, however, believes that a couple years of conference-style playoffs will build that intensity and build those rivalries.

"That's the theory," a suspect Sather says. "But I don't think that's happened and I don't think it ever will happen."

The league also figures that upsets will create rivalries and intensity. "Yeah, that's another theory," says Sather, who isn't buying that one either.

But the postseason rolls on, so we're going to run it down for you. Here's how we see the NHL caste system:

NOT ON YOUR LIFE First, we have to get rid of the clutter, so let's wipe out more than half the field. Too cruel? Well, we say you shouldn't have a league in which half the teams can win your championship, even if you're the NHL.

Gone immediately are the expansion teams—Anaheim, Florida, Ottawa, Tampa Bay and San Jose. Thanks for having nice colors. Now, go.

Next, we're whacking four others who are going about this thing all wrong: Edmonton's garage sale is about over; Hartford can't figure out whether to hit, skate or leave town; Washington still thinks six good defensemen are better than one good goalie; and Winnipeg doesn't have an identity, not to mention a common tongue.

LOVELY PARTING GIFTS Welcome to the middle class, where the upwardly mobile meet those on the way down. These are teams that could manage an upset, then go golfing.

Three teams have slid, maybe not so much in points but certainly in the perspective of being legit the way they used to be. Chicago still plays great defense, but that's about it, and that's not enough. Want proof? None of the last 10 Stanley Cup win-

ners has led the league in goals-against during the regular season. The Blackhawks can be stifling, but if you stop slick/tough center Jeremy Roenick, they're cooked.

After producing big seasons a year ago, Vancouver and Quebec go next. Whatever they needed to get there before, they still don't have—and they've lost what they used to have. For the Canucks, it was goals; for the Nordiques, road toughness.

The other four teams here will take a first-round victory and be happy. The New York Islanders were last year's surprise, so they have to get consideration. They'd need some stud performances from goalie Ron Hextall. Philadelphia would be thrilled just to be there, and with a healthy Eric Lindros, the Flyers could beat up a team or two. Buffalo's attempt to bring Western Conference speed into the East is admirable but incomplete this time around. And New Jersey might actually make something of its considerable talent—but not much.

WATCH OUT Here, we have the upper-middle class, if you will, teams with an overriding reason to think they can be there in June.

In Los Angeles, it's Wayne Gretzky. Just look at last year, when a rocky Kings team reached the Stanley Cup finals—and would've won the damn thing, remarkably enough, if Marty McSorley had a legal stick.

In Dallas, it's Bob Gainey. If he could play, the Stars would be a real contender, but that he's coaching them is enough to make teams worry. He's proving as smart behind the bench as he was a player who won five Cups with Montreal. But a lot depends on how star center Mike Modano comes back from his knee injury, especially in the playoffs, when there's a lot less room to skate.

In St. Louis, the additions of mobile defensemen Phil Housley and Steve Duchesne have been huge. Goaltender Curtis Joseph will face an extraordinary number of shots, but Housley and Duchesne have

HOCKEY WINDYER



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helped limit the damage by moving the puck up to forwards Brett Hull, Brendan Shanahan and Craig Janney, among others. The way the Blues frustrate teams into penalties, special teams and special performances by Joseph make them dangerous.

Boston is a threat because, well, because they're the Bruins, and general manager Harry Sinden always seems to find a way to make the team competitive. Plus, they survived a troublesome regular season with goaltending problems and the diet version of Cam Neely. But if Neely can play every postseason game, and if Sinden gets a netminder, the Bruins could test the Garden air conditioner this summer.

SHOULD MAKE NOISE This is the goods. If you go by chalk and talk and the way things ought to be, here are the favorites—and that's plural, which is another big change from previous years.

The NHL's dynastic ways, you see, have died. Used to be, you'd know which teams were going to come out of which conference, and that was that. Sometimes, not even that mattered, what with the way the Islanders, Oilers and Montreal Canadiens staged postseason parties. But recently, there seem to be some questions, some competition—just look at last year's conference finals in which all four participants had finished in third place in their divisions.

Of course, the above comes with an asterisk.

"If Mario [Lemieux] comes back in April," says Edmonton's Sather, "that changes the odds."

Even so, we've picked out six teams—three from the Eastern Conference, three from the West—two of which figure to end up in the finals.

Pittsburgh: If Mario comes back from his back woes—and everything else that keeps him off the ice—this postseason might be off the board. But even if he doesn't, this Penguins team is scary. You could do worse than Ron Francis as your No. 1 center—and a lot of

teams have. But there's more. A lot more. Flashy Jaromir Jagr, dangerous Kevin Stevens and a revitalized Joe Mullen lead an impressive corps of sniping forwards, while productive Larry Murphy anchors a bunch of anonymous but effective defensemen who've cornered the market on Samuelssons. Plus, a healthy Tom Barrasso is nearly as big as a healthy Lemieux. And remember, the Penguins have won this deal a couple times before.

New York Rangers: No, really. The Rangers, Stanley Cup, same sentence. OK, so they haven't won it since 1940. Hey, everybody slumps, right? This team is loaded—as it was when it bombed the last couple years. The whole team can skate—what a transition game—led by Mark Messier, Adam Graves (he's Messier with a learner's permit), Mike Gartner, Steve Larmer and a collection of talented Europeans. Brian Leetch and Kevin Lowe head a good and reliable defense, making it easy for ace goalie Mike Richter. And new coach Mike Keenan has been there before—three times, in fact. But here's what makes this Rangers talk so combustible: The team that has gone 53 years without a championship is guided by a coach who is 0-for-3 in the finals. Ka-boom.

Montreal: The defending champs—they seem to be the defending champs at least twice a decade—have opened it up the last couple years, which is easier to do when you have Patrick Roy in goal. Some goalies can keep you in most games. Roy keeps you in every postseason. We'd list some of the Canadiens' big guns, but they always seem to bring up a comet sometime in the second half of the year and end up with a hero from nowhere. Whatever, they're the Canadiens, and often, that's enough.

Toronto: Tell you the truth, we were suspect of Maple Leafs goalie Felix Potvin in his sophomore year. Ha! The Cat has proven savvy and spectacular, and a hot goalie can buy you an extra month, if not the whole deal, as Potvin showed last spring when Toronto came within a Wayne Gretzky masterpiece of reaching the finals. With heart and talent in the form of center Doug Gilmour to lead the forwards, this team is tough up and down, which is not to be discounted in eight weeks of 3-2 hockey games. Plus, coach Pat Burns is one of

Patrick Roy (left) and Doug Gilmour (right) should lead the Canadiens and Maple Leafs deep into the playoffs, but Chris Chelios' Blackhawks lack the firepower to make much noise.

B. BENNETT/BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS

the best before and during a game.

Detroit: The best move the Red Wings made didn't involve the players; it was replacing Bryan Murray with Scotty Bowman as coach, and no one has won more games than Bowman. He's also won five Stanley Cups with two teams, and he's the best bench coach ever. And look at the guys on his bench: MVP candidate Sergei Fedorov, Steve Yzerman, Dino Ciccarelli, Keith Primeau, a bunch of other guys who can light it up, and a defense that follows simple instructions. If there's a problem, it's Tim Cheveldae in the net. He's durable, not enduring, and they've flirted with Edmonton's Bill Ranford and Florida's John Vanbiesbrouck, which was all Bowman needed.

Calgary: To be honest, the Flames aren't as legitimate as they used to be. They aren't as strong, aren't as dominating. But coach Dave King has some of their big heads under control, and they're a contender mostly because of the division. See, if they win the Pacific, they'll get a better seed than they deserve and perhaps face teams more beaten up, mostly from the Central Division—and who you play is almost as important as how well you play. Plus, a lot of the guys who helped them win the Cup in '89 are still around.

THE PICK So who gets Lord Stanley's beaker? We say Bowman and the Red Wings will get there, but Bowman's former team, the Penguins, will beat 'em. Revenge, motivation, all that stuff. The Penguins should've won it last year, but their try for a three-peat taught them a sobering lesson about first-round series against inferior teams. This time, they figure to be mad, and we hear Lemieux will have a note from his doctor. ★

SPORT VIEW

(Continued from page 12)

The revenue-sharing/salary-cap scheme is not only blatantly anticompetitive, it is poorly conceived, without logic, and may well be illegal.

The enormously successful industry of Major League Baseball seems unable to deal with its own prosperity. Its total revenue climbs by leaps and bounds every year. Last year, it set another new record of nearly \$2 billion, having climbed from less than \$50 million 25 years ago. In 1993, the two expansion franchises paid the established clubs an all-time record \$95 million each. The sale of the Baltimore club (a small-market team!) to new owners set a record price of \$173 million. Paid attendance in 1993 reached well over 70 million, an all-time record for the 10th time in the last 12 years. Where once a club's paid attendance of one million was considered more than satisfactory, the Colorado Rockies expansion club last season drew nearly 4½ million fans!

It is unbecoming and unjustified for club owners to be seeking a handout either from their fellow owners or the players or anyone else. It is counterproductive to concoct a plan to reward and subsidize the least competent ownership and management (imagine such a plan throughout American industry). It is stupid to remove from some club owners an incentive to win by subsidizing their failures to be competitive. It is foolish to create and provoke a major dispute with the players union in an attempt to force a poorly conceived, unworkable and unnecessary plan on the players. And it may well be illegal even to attempt to get the union to be the instrument to force down salaries when the union is not even the collective bargaining agent for the players' individual salaries.

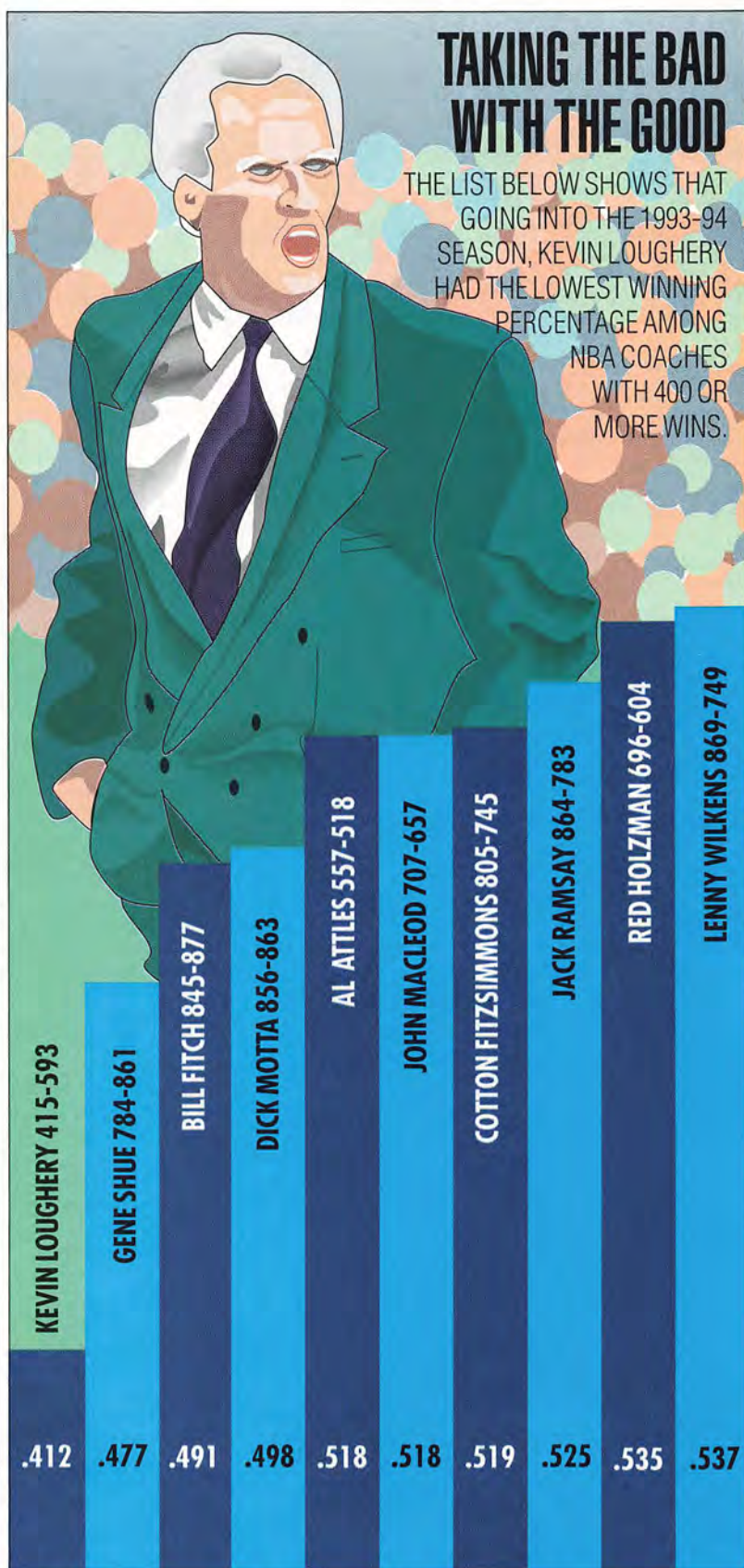
In this country, under law, a union exists to improve the wages and working conditions of the employees for whom it is the bargaining agent. The concept of a salary cap under these circumstances is anomalous to the nth degree. Perhaps in order to illustrate the idiocy of the concept, the union should propose a revenue cap; if the owners' gross revenue gets beyond a specified level, the entire excess shall go to the players or, better yet, shall be distributed to the fans and the local community. That, at least, would be socially useful. ★

Marvin Miller was executive director of the Major League Players Association from its inception in 1966 until 1983 and is credited with building and holding together the most effective union in the history of professional sports. He is the author of *A Whole New Ballgame*, published by Carrol Publishing and Simon & Schuster.

SPORT SCOPE

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